

BULLETIN
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF
ST. BONIFACE

PIERRE GAULTIER DE VARENNES
SIEUR DE LA VERENDRYE

CAPTAIN OF MARINES, CHEVALIER OF THE MILITARY ORDER
OF ST. LOUIS, DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH-WEST.
1685-1749

By His Honor Judge L. A. Prud'homme

MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ST. BONIFACE

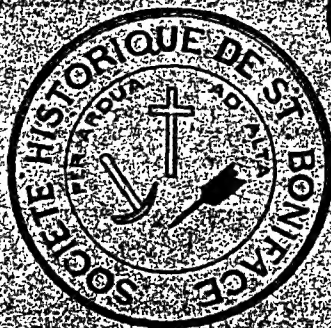
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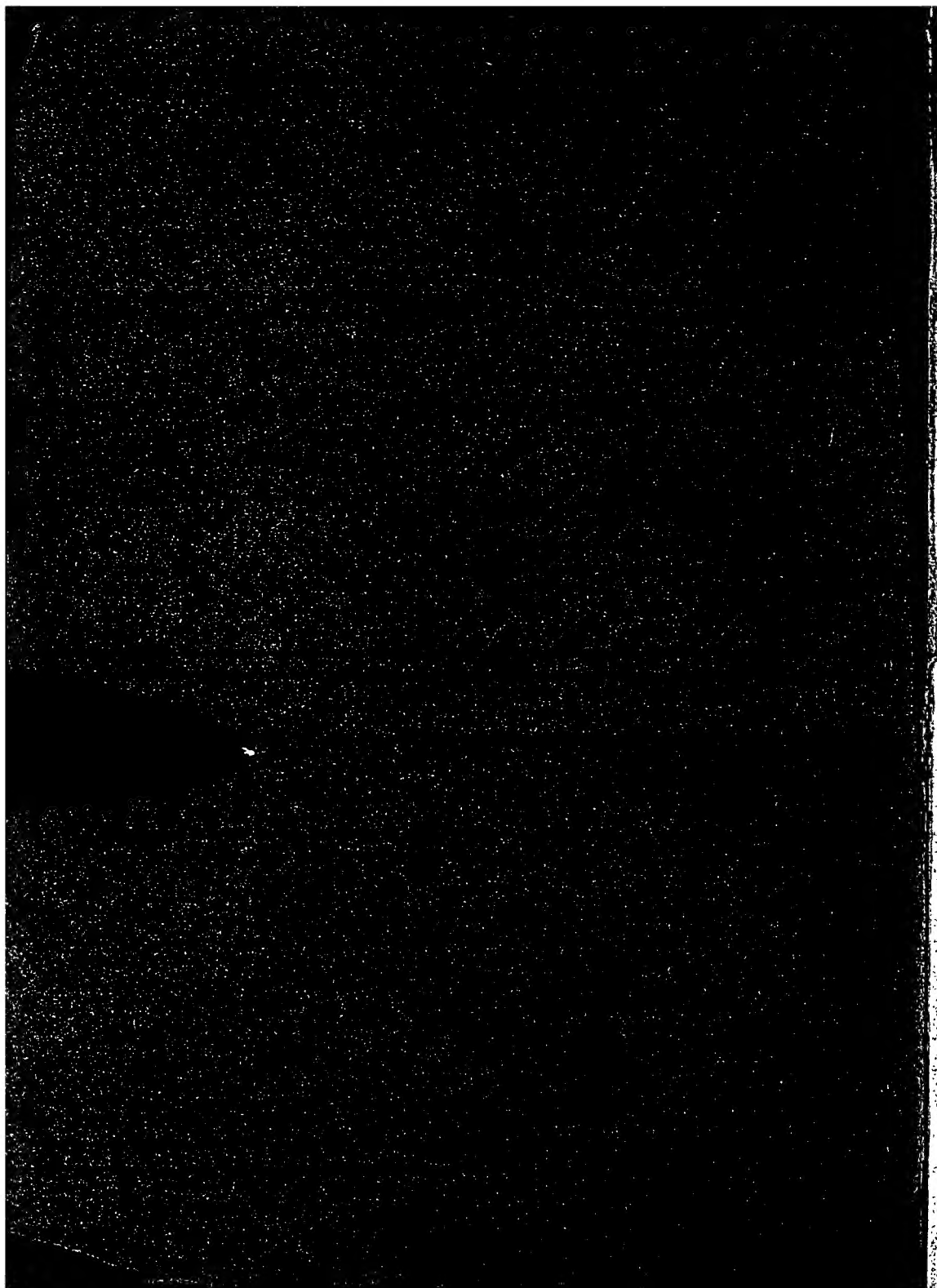
VOL. V

PART 2

YEAR 1916



LE MANITOBA Print. St. Boniface, Man.



PIERRE GAULTIER DE VARENNES
SIEUR DE LA VERENDRYE



THE LATE ARCHBISHOP LANGEVIN

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE "HISTORICAL SOCIETY" OF ST. BONIFACE,
HE LED THE EXPEDITIONS OF 1902, 1905 AND 1907 IN PERSON
AND IT IS TO HIS EFFORTS THAT THE DISCOVERY OF FORT ST.
CHARLES IS DUE.

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INTRODUCTION

Western Canada owes a deep debt of gratitude to two great men, whose achievements will endear them forever to future generations.

La Vérendrye the discoverer and Selkirk the father of the first colony of the West, by their unfaltering perseverance and noble qualities of the heart and mind, have opened up the wild West to christian civilization.

I have tried in this work, to outline the chief characteristics of the Discoverer and pay to his memory the tribute of admiration which it so justly deserves.

Due justice has already been done by historians to the noble Lord who followed the Discoverer and revealed to the world the immense resources of our fertile lands.

I may be allowed though, to add one word.

When Selkirk landed here, he found the country robed in the richest drapery of a fruitfulness of verdure and almost unoccupied, except by roaming tribes and a few scattered fur-hunters.

Nevertheless, when he died, he left the nucleus of the first colony planted on the banks of the Red River.

By his undaunted spirit of uprightness, his energetic power, characteristic of his national spirit and his persevering energy, he laid entombed in the Western Prairie, the love of the land and an unfaltering faith in the bountiful richness in store for the toilers of the soil. To him we may appropriate these verses of a poet:

*For the West, in the prairie wide
Beyond the realm of Gaul a land there lies
Where in boundless plains, the Indians roam
Millions of settlers shall find a lasting home.*

He richly deserves to be considered as a great benefactor of our country and his name should forever be associated with that of La Vérendrye in our gratitude.

True it is, that the French Canadians have a special claim on

La Vérendrye and the English Canadians on Selkirk, but these two great men, cannot be held within the compass of only one nationality. They are the glory of the West, and the fathers of that part of Canada.

All Canadians should learn their name, study their life and try to imitate their spirit of sacrifice for the love of their country. We should therefore all join in crowning their glorious brows with wreath of laurels so dearly gained by their patriotism.

Their careers are worthy of envy and emulation. They were nation builders by their indomitable spirit and dogged pertinacity.

Always true and loyal to their country in their arduous task, they have conquered not only an immense territory but also the grateful and affectionate remembrance of all citizens of Canada.

Whilst La Vérendrye was at Fort St. Charles, he received one day, a message from the governor of York Factory, through one Indian Chief.

I have been informed said the governor to the Chief, that there is a French Explorer in the interior of this country; take that message to him: "Between him and me there should be only love and fraternity. This country is large enough for the both of us, each one working to the best of his ability for the good of the country."

La Vérendrye fully reciprocated these sentiments and insisted as proof of his loyalty, that all Indians who had traded with the English Fort, should go and pay their debts, if any, to the governor for any advance made to them. Let us pause upon and meditate this message of peace, justice and love.

We will find in it, precious lessons for the races who have followed the footsteps of La Vérendrye, and inspiring examples for all the inhabitants of the West. It is only by mutual respect for the laws of justice and true kindness for each other, that we may expect to lay the lasting foundations of a nation great, strong, prosperous and content and to cement its component parts in brotherly love and harmony by indissoluble ties, under the British flag.

L. A. PRUD'HOMME.

St. Boniface, August 1st, 1916.

PREFACE

In preparing the first edition of the life of La Vérendrye, I made use of the most interesting work of Senator T. A. Bernier, especially, and the very valuable notes of Mr. B. Sulte on that illustrious gentleman.

Discovery of numerous new documents by our friend Mr. Leau, of Paris, of the ruins of Fort St. Charles and of the lead tablet near Pierre, S. Dakota, will throw new light upon the expedition of our discoverer, and establish in a definite manner, historical points hitherto obscure or provocative of controversy.

I believe that, to honor more fittingly the memory of this great patriot, at a time when a monument is about to be erected to him, a second and more documentary, less imperfect edition, is necessary. In presenting it to the public, I can say that I have scrupulously followed the text, adhering to it as closely as possible, and at times leaving the words of La Vérendrye himself.

The narrative would have been more lively and free, I confess, if I had stripped it of a thousand details which the historian ordinarily neglects. I cannot therefore ask any indulgence of the reader for this intentional slow narrative because, it seems to me, it throws more into relief, the dangers, sufferings, courage and deed of the discoverer. It will suffice if that indulgence does not fail me despite numerous other imperfections in this little book.

There will be found in many places variations between the dates which I give and those published in Margry. This is because I have deemed it my duty to adopt the dates given in the daily diary of La Vérendrye in preference to those contained in the summary reports of others addressed to the governor of the colony or to the court of France.

St. Boniface.

L. A. PRUD'HOMME.

PIERRE GAULTIER DE VARENNES

SIEUR DE LA VERENDRYE

CAPTAIN OF MARINES, CHEVALIER OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF
ST. LOUIS, DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH-WEST.

OUTLINES ON HIS CHIEF QUALITIES AND NATURE OF THE DIFFI-
CULTIES HE HAD TO CONTEND WITH.

1685—1749.

*"I have sacrificed myself and
my children for the service of
His Majesty and the good of the
colony." (Words of La Véren-
drye), Margry, vol. 6, p. 593.*

*"The nations proud of their
past and strong in their patriot-
ism are the ones that will remain
unconquered.—FRED. GAGNON.*

This great discoverer was the Jacques Cartier of the North-West. He was the first white man to dip paddle in the waters of the Red or Assiniboine rivers, and the first whose voice singing the merry Canadian ditties was echoed through the solitudes of these unexplored lands. He brought to the tribes whom he visited, the sweet language of France, the light of the Faith ever advancing on his far reaching expeditions in company with Jesuit missionaries who sowed in this virgin soil the first seeds of the Gospel. When, seventy-five years after these first apostles of Christianity had abandoned the country, Bishop Provencher landed here, he found still among some of the savages dwelling close to Fort Dauphin and Souris river, some indistinct remembrance of the stay of the French discoverers.

Several peculiar qualities stamp in a most striking manner

the features of La Vérendrye, and adorn them with a grandeur, a nobility, that raises him far above the other discoverers of his time. In the first place he was endowed with an indomitable courage, which instead of being worn out by difficulties and disappointments, seemed to rise in proportion to the obstacles encountered. He was, moreover, a man strong in faith, sweetly pious, and this helped him to bear the severe hardships of his expeditions. Added to these qualities, he possessed sound judgment and a wonderful sagacity in selecting places to locate his trading depots so that they were at the same time strategically adapted for the purposes of commerce. A clear proof of this is found in his getting the monopoly of the western trade, which, before he arrived had always taken the Hudson Bay route, and in the fact that both the North-West and the Hudson's Bay companies established trading posts close to the ruins of those former forts erected by La Vérendrye.

Two great obstacles tried the courage and constancy of La Vérendrye, and united to impede his westward progress. The first had for its cause the undying hatred and the constant wars existing between the Crees and the Sioux, through whose hunting grounds he was obliged to lead his expeditions. In spite of his request, oft repeated, that the government keep the Sioux quiet, while he would endeavor to pacify the Crees, he was left unsupported.

In 1737, shortly after the slaughter at Massacre Island, Fort Beauharnois was evacuated by the French. The Sioux, thus relieved of the moral restraints imposed on their unruly passions by the presence of the traders, were allowed to give free rein to their ferocious instincts. As a consequence of this state of affairs, La Vérendrye was nearly starving in his forts, because the Cree warriors were constantly on the war path. Instead of hunting furs they were hunting scalps. Trade dwindled and the discoverer who had no other means of paying his expenses except from the profits of his fur sales, was extremely pinched and in the end became bankrupt. The war between the Crees and the Sioux, having increased in violence in consequence of the abandonment of Fort Beauharnois, was the first, and I might add, the most serious difficulty that met La Vérendrye on his way.

The second obstacle arose because, as France, from 1696 to 1713, occupied Hudson Bay, she had drawn the savages to her trading posts there. When the English flag supplanted the French in that region, the Indians being used to that trail, continued to visit the forts at the bay.

Trading, while French rule lasted, had gone down at Nepigon Lake and by the Great Lakes. No very great complaints had been heard on that account so large as trade was in the hands of the French; but after the treaty of Utrecht it was quite another thing. It was no easy task to induce the natives to renounce their old ways and to stop in transit the furs destined for the bay ports.

The third and last obstacle was the law made by Governor Burnet in the year 1727, the same in which La Vérendrye reached Lake Nepigon. This shrewd diplomat had found out that most French traders went to New York where they bought at far lower prices than they paid for those they ordered in France. Burnet cut off their trade by prohibiting all exportation from New York to New France. For a time the traders lost heart and a commercial crisis prevailed.

At the time that La Vérendrye began his discoveries, French merchandise reached Canada in a most desultory way and was sold at very high prices. The number of providers being restricted and there being no competition these men could and did charge almost any price they chose.

La Vérendrye, who was not rich, had to place himself in the hands of these merchants who profited by his unfortunate circumstances to retain their grip upon him. In spite of this distressing state of affairs, La Vérendrye undertook his expedition into the North-West. The many obstacles he met and had to conquer merely served to show the fertility of his resource and the unquenchable force of his courage. By his gentleness of manner and his upright dealings, he won both the love and respect from the natives. In a period of twelve years he discovered a territory greater than France and added to the area of the colony very nearly as great a dominion as had been conquered up to that time by his predecessors. As if to add a further glory to his name and to render him the more interesting to the historian, envy did him the honor to persecute him and ingratitude to be the reward for

the eminent services he had rendered his fatherland. It is a pleasure to contemplate for a while, this glorious and untainted memory which the poisoned breath of jealousy has vainly attempted to tarnish.

In the service of God and France, La Vérendrye sacrificed his eldest son, his nephew, his health and his patrimony. When he perceived that the uproar made by his detractors drowned his voice, and that the sovereign whom he had served with such touching devotion did not hear him, he did not resort to the bitter complaints and indignant protests which might justly have proceeded from his heart. He did not try to crush his adversaries. The only thing he did was to protest vigorously and show by incontrovertible proofs that the minister for the colonies had allowed himself to be hoodwinked; that, far from having amassed wealth by trading, as his enemies pretended, he had not secured sufficient returns to defray the expenses of his expeditions. Then in the bitterness of his soul, he sought his own home. The truth came out in the end, at least in part, but this tardy justice only came as a consolation in the closing days of his life.

Death, which softens hatred, and gives an opportunity to value men at their true worth, reveals La Vérendrye in our times, greater still than he ever appeared in the midst of his successes or trials.

Now is the time to set up a monument to this great and vanished hero.

This was a great conqueror, who, without shedding a drop of blood except what his own kindred and devoted followers willingly offered, opened to Christian civilization half of the North American continent. The King of France had entrusted him with a mission which required considerable means to meet the expenses incurred; but he was abandoned to his fate after having been authorized to control the trade of the territories he might discover. He was forced by necessity to surrender this monopoly to the creditors who advanced him the money or supplies for his expeditions and shut off their advances when they thought the profits not up to their exorbitant demands. Finally, to satisfy the greed of his creditors, he turned over to them entirely the control of the

trade of the new territories, so that he might be free to prosecute his exploration across the prairies.

His expeditions comprise three voyages :

1. From 1731 to 1734, when he built Forts St. Pierre, St. Charles, Maurepas and Aux Roseaux.

2. From 1735 to 1737, when numerous sadly adverse circumstances nullified his efforts and hindered his further progress.

3. From 1738 to 1743, when he built Fort La Reine, got acquainted with the Mandans on the Missouri, sent an expedition headed by his sons that reached the banks of the Saskatchewan, and proceeded next to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. He then returned to Montreal where he was compelled to give up his commission.

La Vérendrye lacked no quality that is to be found in leaders of great enterprises. His judgment, quick and sound, could at once discern the end to be achieved and the means to ensure its successful accomplishment. Endowed with an iron will that nothing could daunt, he was ever found, in the most appalling difficulties, calm and undismayed. He was not a fiery and impulsive nature capable of sudden glorious actions but subject to depression and discouragement through a succession of trials. The chief feature in La Vérendrye's character is his indomitable tenacity of purpose, a tenacity that increased with the need for greater and more constant effort. With his face to the west he never halted in his westward march till he had discovered the whole west, up to the Rocky Mountains, and achieved this without the colony disbursing one cent, nor the French king either.

On but one occasion did he betray any indecision. That was when, within the space of one month, he had suffered the loss of his eldest son, his nephew, his missionary and 19 of his men. Then his eyes filled with tears and his countenance was overcast. But, as if regenerated by this baptism of blood of Massacre Island, his courage rose to the pitch demanded of him by his fatherland.

"Justum et tenacem imparidum ferient ruinæ."

La Vérendrye proposed to plant in the virgin soil of our prairies the seed of lasting institutions; accordingly he took care to establish them on a strong foundation and brought with him

missionaries who at the dawn of the discovery of the west, would establish the faith.

We must not forget this grand purpose of La Vérendrye, a purpose so full of, a weighty lesson.

Human passions may later on adulterate this first seed and prevent for a time its full development, but the divine principle which is its source and the reason of its fecundity will henceforth ensure its duration and abundant fruition.

Great minds appreciate the importance of laying the foundation of a colony in this way. Western Canada at the time of its discovery had in its heart the teachings of the true Gospel. Catholicism imprinted on its forehead the seal of that moral grandeur which makes its present strength and its future hope.

HIS BIRTH. HIS FAMILY

Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de La Vérendrye, was descended from ancestors remarkable for their abilities and the high offices they zealously and devotedly filled.

His father was René Gaultier, knight and sieur de Varennes. He was a lieutenant and reached Canada with the regiment of Carignan. (1665). On September 26, 1667, he married Marie, a daughter of the famous Pierre Boucher, who, as a reward for the signal services he had rendered the colony had obtained patent of nobility from the King of France. Like his father-in-law, he became governor of Three Rivers and held this office from 1668 to his death in 1689. In 1682 he was endowed with the manors of Varennes and Tremblay. The discoverer of the North-West was therefore through his mother, related to the illustrious Boucher family, which has such an honorable place in the history of our country. He is therefore an inheritor of the greatest names and the most distinguished and patriotic characters of New France. He was born at Three Rivers on November 17, 1685.

Pierre Boucher, his grandfather on his mother's side was his godfather and it was in honor of this relative that he was named Pierre. Here is his certificate of baptism: "On the eighteenth day of November, in the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-five, by me, F. G. de Brullon, vicar of the parish church

of Our Lady of Three Rivers, has been christened in the said church, Pierre Gaultier, son of Mr. René Gaultier, Esq., sieur of Varennes and governor for His Majesty, of Three Rivers, and of Marie Boucher, his wife. The child was born on the seventeenth of the said month and year. His godfather was Mr. Pierre Boucher, his grandfather, in place of whom his son Lambert Boucher held the said child; and the godmother was Madeleine Gaultier, called du Tremblé, his sister, who have signed as required :

Grand Pré.

(Signatures) Magdelaine de Varennes.

F. G. de Brullon."

November 17 was a Saturday and the christening took place on Sunday. He had an elder brother whose name was Louis de La Vérendrye, and who was baptized September 7, 1673. On November 15, 1690, Frontenac appointed him ensign in place of Mr. Le Gardeur who had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Louis later became a captain and was killed in a campaign in Italy. Up to the time of his brother's death, the discoverer bore the name of "Boumois." He took the name of "La Vérendrye" only after the death of his elder brother. The name "La Vérendrye" was that of one of his uncles living in France.

La Vérendrye had the following sisters and brothers :

1. Louis, born in 1673, died about 1707, unmarried.
2. Madeleine, born in 1674; married in 1694, Charles Petit Le Villiers.
3. Jacques René, born in 1677; married in 1712 Jeanne Lemoine de Sainte-Hélène, and continued the line, his descendants being still.
4. Jean-Baptiste, born in 1677, twin brother of Jacques René; ordained priest in 1709; became procurator of the Seminary of Quebec in 1712 and later on became Grand Archdeacon and Vicar General of Quebec; died March 30, 1726. (1)
5. Marie Marguerite, born 1680; married in 1707, Louis Hingue de Puijibault.

(1) Archives R. S. C. 1889, p. 41; Judgments of the Superior Council, vol. vi, p. 374.

6. Marie Renée, born 1682; married in 1701, Christophe Dufros de la Gemberaye (Jemmeray). Of this marriage there was issue, one son who bore the same name as his father and became the lieutenant of his uncle, the discoverer, in his expeditions in the Northwest; and a daughter, Marie Marguerite, who married François Madeleine d'Youville, on August 12, 1712, was widowed and founded the Congregation of Sisters of Charity.

7. Anne Marguerite, born 1684; entered the Ursuline order.

8. Philippe, born in 1687, who appears to have died in infancy.

9. Pierre, born in 1689, was the last child.

When the father of this large family died June 4, 1689, he left his widow in very poor circumstances, not to say in absolute penury. The seigniory of la Gabelle which they owned, had not a single inhabitant, and produced no income; that of Tremblay had only six tenants and that of Varennes could boast but 71 inhabitants. These lands being still in a wild state, yielded but a nominal revenue.

HIS BEGINNINGS. MILITARY DEEDS. BATTLE OF MALPLAQUET.

Following the example of his brother, La Vérendrye started his career in the army. As in most noble families, the love of arms was hereditary in his. In 1704 he was sent to fight in New England and the year following he was sent in the depth of winter to campaign in New Foundland. De Subercase commanded the expedition. That handful of brave men took possession of the whole island, leaving in the hands of the English only the fort of St. John's and Carbonnière island. In 1707 he went to Flanders and saw service with a company of grenadiers under the command of his brother. This company belonged to the regiment of Brittany. Up to 1709, he remained with those grenadiers.

In the later year, (Sept. 11, 1709), the celebrated battle of Malplaquet was fought between the Marshal de Villars and the combined forces of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. La Vérendrye was wounded in nine places, once by a bullet and eight times by sabre cuts. He was left on the field for dead.

His gallantry in that bloody encounter was rewarded by his name being cited in the orders of the day by promotion to the rank of Lieutenant.

On account of the state of his finances La Vérendrye could not afford to make much of an appearance in the army in France. That was why he was obliged to return to Canada, and, much to his chagrin, to accept a lower rank, that of ensign.

Louis XIV. had not been able to confirm the promotions made after the battle of Malplaquet because of the depletion of his treasury. A cadet certificate which La Vérendrye had won in America was cancelled for the same reason. It was only with the greatest difficulty that Mme de Vaudreuil, who was then in France, succeeded in securing for him an ensign's commission, with which he returned to Canada. When the war was over he found himself deprived even of his salary as an officer and he applied to the Marquis de Vaudreuil for permission to conduct a trading post on his little estate at la Gabelle near Three Rivers.

(1) The Marquis de Vaudreuil who took a kindly interest in him granted his request and he was in 1715 able to begin doing business at La Gabelle in the river of Three Rivers. It is most likely that his first information about the North-West was derived from the St. Maurice Indians who were in touch with those of Hudson Bay. Moreover, the Têtes de Boule of the St. Maurice traded with the Crees at Lake Nepigon. They used to meet at the English forts and bartered their goods at James Bay. These Têtes de Boule also came to Three Rivers and it is probable that La Vérendrye had many opportunities of getting from them general information of the North-West.

(1) La Gabelle is a rapid separated by a huge rock in the form of a horse shoe, on the east, and the Iroquois fall on the west. This rapid is about three leagues above the post of Les Forges. (*Revue Canadienne*, 1906, pp. 189-190.)

HIS MARRIAGE. HIS CHILDREN.

On the death of her husband, the mother of the Discoverer divided his property among his children. The Discoverer inherited the Tremblay seigniory, the estate next to the Varennes estates, on July 1, 1707, and in the same year, November 9, signed his marriage settlement with his future bride whom he could not marry till five years later. The cause of this delay was his absence, for he went to join the colors in France a few days after signing the marriage settlement. He returned to Canada some time between 1710 and 1712.

On October 29, 1712, he married Marie-Anne Dandonneau du Sablé, daughter of Louis Dandonneau du Sablé, sieur of du Pas island, and Jeanne Lenoir. Of this union four sons were born: Jean-Baptiste, born at Sorel, September 5, 1713; Pierre Gaultier, born December 26, 1714; François, born December 22, 1715, and Louis-Joseph, born November 9, 1717. All four sons took part in the expeditions of discovery in the North-West.

AT LAKE NEPIGON, 1727-1728. FORTS FOUNDED BY
LA TOURETTE AT NEPIGON LAKE.

The proceeds collected by trading at the little post of La Gabelle were hardly sufficient to provide the most indispensable necessities of a modest establishment. In 1726 he went to France and tried to have his promotion to the rank of lieutenant endorsed. His voyage was fruitless and he hastened back to Canada. According as his children grew up he realized that his income was inadequate. Moreover, he had no intention of passing his whole life in that humble post. La Vérendrye needed a larger field, greater scope for his energy and talents. In his family the North-West was a frequent and interesting topic. Jacques Babie, who had married Jeanne Dandonneau, daughter of Pierre Dandonneau, sieur du Sablé, lord of Isle du Pas, a paternal uncle of La Vérendrye's wife, had traded with Outaouais Indians between the years 1671 and 1689. He had followed the missionaries as far as Baie des Puants, (Green Bay), on the west of Lake Michigan. Also, René Bou-

cher, sieur de La Perrière, Pierre Boucher de Boucherville and Boucher de Montbrun, relatives of La Vérendrye, had explored the Sioux country and attracted the notice of the governor by the courage and shrewdness they had displayed on their distant journeys. Being in daily intercourse with such persons, La Vérendrye could not fail to follow in their footsteps.

The governor appointed him to the command of the posts established by La Tourette at Lake Nepigon, which required a man that could be depended on, endowed with an adventurous disposition also.

Charles de Greysolon, sieur de La Tourette, a brother of Duluth, had built the following forts :

1. Camanistigoya, in 1678, at the entrance of the river of that name. (Lake-Nepigon.)

2. La Tourette, in 1684, at the mouth of Ombabiha river.

3. Des Français, in 1686, near the junction of the Kinagami and Albany rivers. It so happened that these forts were nearest to the English forts of Hudson Bay, and to compete with them required that the French should give the management to an energetic and conciliatory officer to bring the Crees to Lake Nepigon. By sending him to such a place the governor consequently showed him how much he relied on him. His success exceeded his greatest hopes.

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO PENETRATE THE WEST BEFORE LA VERENDRYE.

M. DE NOYON, SIEUR DE LA CROIX, LAKE LA CROIX, 1688.

Before La Vérendrye's arrival at Lake Nepigon, the French had made some attempts to penetrate farther inland; but the little success they had met until then sets forth in stronger relief, the superior merit of La Vérendrye and the higher quality of his talents.

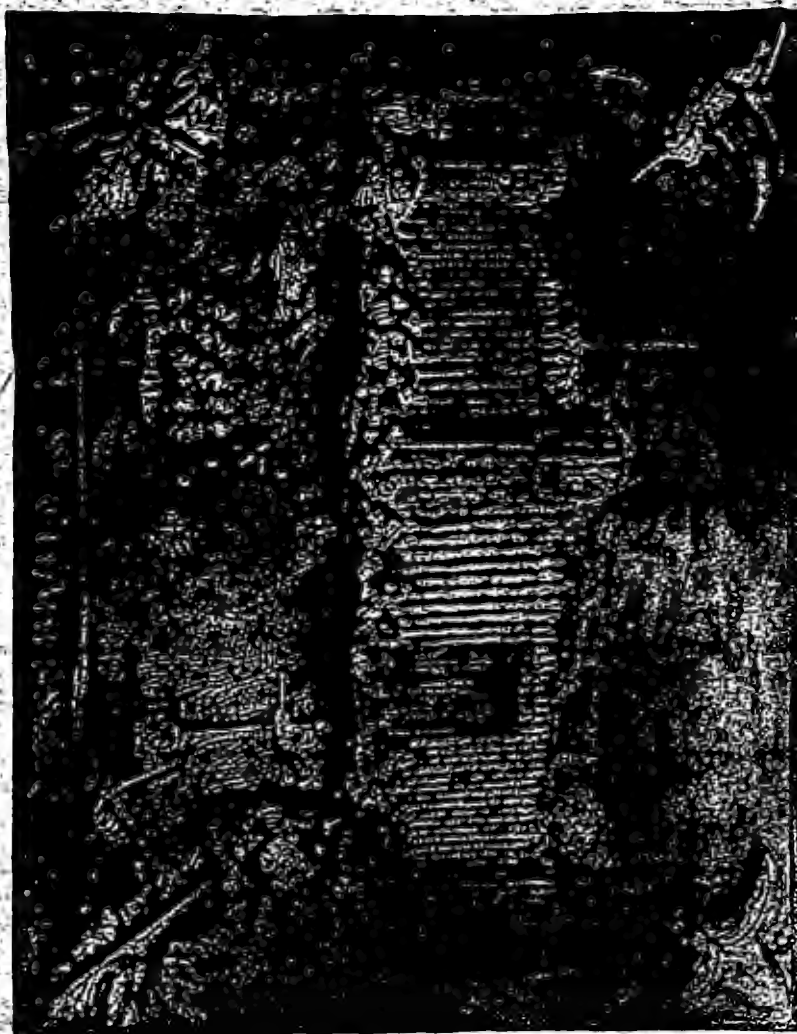
At this point we must confess that divers attempts have been made by certain people to impugn the right of La Vérendrye to be called the first discoverer of the West, or at least to pretend to

doubt it. We will therefore try to clear this historical point so as to establish clearly his right and clear up all doubt as to his glory or his rights. The first traveller, bold enough to advance into the interior of the country, was Jacques de Noyon. This explorer was born at Three Rivers, February 12, 1668, of the marriage of Jean de Noyon and Marie Chauvin. He was christened by a Sulpician priest, Reverend Father Dollier de Casson, author of the history of Montreal.

He was hardly 20 years old when in 1688 he entered the Kamanistigouen river (Kamanistiquia), near Fort William. "You go up this river," he says, "for ten leagues, after which there is a portage of about ten acres, the canoes being drawn up by means of ropes. Next to this portage there is a rapid two leagues long. From this rapid there is a portage of an acre. At three leagues farther up there is another portage, a league across, which is called Portage du Chien. After making this portage there is a lake three leagues long. The same river continues beyond for a distance of fifteen leagues. There is then a portage of a league and then a lake is reached in the middle of a swamp with no outlet. This lake is about ten acres across and is level with the land. At the other side of the lake there is a portage through a league of swamp to a river which goes ten leagues to a lake called Canoe lake. Advancing through this lake for six leagues, on the right bank there is found a cove from which you cross through a portage of three acres or thereabouts, with poplars, and you come to a small river bristly with wild oats. Going up this river in your canoe you go for two days at about ten leagues a day. You now come to a fall and find a portage one acre long reaching Lac des Cris or Christinaux which is about 500 leagues in circumference. Weeping to the left you follow the shore for eight leagues where the lake empties into the Takamaniouen which the Crees also call Ouchichig. You go down this river for six days, travelling at least 80 leagues without reaching a rapid. Up this river, about two leagues there is a fall and a portage of about an acre. In this river two more falls are met where you portage above the said falls. (1)

(1) The Rainy river, to which there is here a reference, is 90 miles long. We find at Fort Frances a fall of 24 feet in two drops. The Manitou

SKETCH OF FORT ST. CHARLES PREPARED FROM PLANS AND DESCRIPTIONS.



FAC SIMILE OF
LA VÉRENDRYE'S AUTOGRAPH

La Verendrye

"You then come to the Lac aux Iles, also called the Assiniboiles or Gens de la Pierre-Noire, 500 leagues in circumference. On the left shore is a bare country and on the right all kinds of trees and many islands. At the end is a river which flows into the western sea, according to the natives." (1) This information has been taken from a memoir accompanying the letter of de Vaudreuil and Begon, dated Nov. 12, 1716.

This memoir says : "De Noyon had wintered at the entrance of the Christineaux or Ouichichig lake which leads to Lake Assiniboiles (Lake Winnipeg), and thence to the Western sea (Pacific Ocean.)

"The Assiniboines, 28 years previous, had offered to take him with them to the Western sea, where they were going to wage war with a party of about 100 men, on a nation whose men were only three and a half or four feet high, and very stout. Mr. Jérémye saw two of them who had been brought over by the Indians after capturing them on the beach. They looked like other savages except that they had curly hair. These reported that they had cities and fortified towns, that the men rode horses with their wives mounted behind them, that they were white and bearded, and that they had seen ships and heard the sound of cannon. They assured De Noyon that it would take five months to go there and back, going down a fine river; that after reaching the high and low tide of the sea it took three days to reach the sea. Then they landed in a large town surrounded with stone walls. They claimed to have seen ships and to have heard cannon in the lower part of that river where they went to fight those short men; but they did not dare to go close to the towns nor did they trade with the inhabitants. They caught two sheep and De Noyon got the skins." (2)

In the spring De Noyon returned to Canada and led the life of a wood rover and traded with Boston or Albany. In 1704, he

rapid is 35 miles long down and the Long Sault about 15 miles below that again. A mile and a half above Fort Frances is Fort St. Pierre close to where Rainy Lake empties into Rainy River.

(1) Margry, vol. 6, p. 495.

(2) Margry, vol. 6, p. 496.

married Marguerite Stebbens, at Dearfield, Massachusetts, where he seems to have stayed till 1710 when he removed to Boucherville. His numerous progeny was brought up in this place. His last child was born in 1726. (1)

It is simple enough to retrace the voyage of De Noyon. He went up the Kaministiquia river to Dog lake and river, crossed a portage there at the height of land and entered the lake of Mille-Lacs. Then crossing the Seine river, he went to Rainy lake and Rainy river as far as the Lake of the Woods (Lac aux Isles.) He went no farther; that is why he says "from the end of this lake there is another river flowing into the Western sea, according to the natives."

As for the reports of the Indians it is well to be on our guard against their exaggerations in their imaginative language and to reduce their reports from their fantastic proportions to true. In this description which an imaginative people would have over-colored, we think we recognize a sketch of Spanish settlements which the Assiniboines probably visited at the mouth of the Mississippi. Moreover the establishments of the Spaniards were not constantly by the seashore. At an early date they had marched forward to the heart of the continent. For instance in 1541 Ferdinand de Soto set out from Florida with an army of about 1,000 men and went as far as the Arkansas river in search of gold and silver mines. He reached the banks of the Mississippi, where he died.

As for the horses, we know that the Gens de l'Arc, (Bow Indians,) had procured some from the Spaniards together with some mules and asses long before the arrival of La Vérendrye. The natives of the south, some of whom became their prisoners, though not so tall as their Northern brethren, were by no means dwarfs as affirmed by the Assiniboines. We can without the least twinge of conscience add one more foot to their height. It is quite certain that the Sioux tribe, to which the Assiniboines belonged, had frequent intercourse with them. We should not wonder either that the savages ranged the country far and wide. We have ample proofs that warlike parties from the prairies cross-

(1) *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*, 1908, p. 183.—B. SULTE.

ed the Rockies and waged war on their enemies on the Pacific coast. Slave Lake was so called because the prisoners taken on the Pacific slope were brought there. From the quotations we have made from the above memoir it is clear that, in 1688, De Noyon went as far as the Lake of the Woods and no farther.

Margry, vol. 6, p. 498, cites a bylaw of the Naval Council, dated February 3rd, 1717, in which is found the following sentence: "A few travellers have reached the Lake of the Assiniboines which is the highest of any known on the continent, and there is a river flowing from that lake to the Western sea on which ships could sail."

This note is found directly after the note we have just quoted. It is quite clear it was intended as a commentary for the better understanding of the ministry of marine, made on the memoir sent by Messrs. Vaudreuil and Begon. The men referred to by this note are de Noyon, Lacroix and their followers. The lake of the Assiniboines is no other than the Lake of the Woods which de Noyon mentions under the three names, "Lac aux Isles," "The Assiniboines," and "Gens de la Pierre Noire." This mistake is the more easily explained by the fact that the Assiniboines visited the Lake of the Woods and there traded with their allies, the Crees. The same mistake was repeated in later memoirs that de Noyon's and the Lake of the Woods has been counfounded with Lake Winnipeg.

This note also shows what importance is to be attached to such legends. In it we hear of a river that flows from the Lake of the Woods to the Pacific Ocean. Evidently they did not know much of the country west of the Lake of the Woods. Judging from the memoir, we can be absolutely sure that travellers knew the route, before 1716, taking the Kaministigoya river as a starting point, to the Lake of the Woods, known as "Lac aux Isles." The whole route is shown as well as the portages and rapids. It seems that de la Croix who was in 1684 at Nepigon Lake, took part in the expedition of de Noyon. On returning he was in a canoe with two paddlers and had reached the lake west of Hunter's Island, (Isle des Chasseurs), when he was caught in a terrific storm that upset the canoe. His two companions managed to escape by clinging to the canoe, but de la Croix was carried away

by the waves and was drowned. On this account the lake was later named Lac la Croix, and since changed to Lac Ste-Croix. From the foregoing explanations we may conclude that in 1716 the French knew the Lake of the Woods, having visited both it and Lake Winnipeg, and heard the Indians speak of them. The Kaministigoya river route was abandoned in 1731, and only reopened by Hon. Rodrick McKenzie in 1797, who called it the Lac du Chien route, because it passed Lac du Chien. This old route of the French, which was the first followed in penetrating the west, was shown to McKenzie by an Indian family employed by him as guides.

PLAN OF MICHAEL BEGON, INTENDANT OF THE COLONY.

Mr. Begon formed the scheme of connecting Lake Superior with Lake Winnipeg by a chain of three posts. By this means he hoped to deprive the Hudson Bay posts of their trade. His first post was to be established at Kaministigoya river, the second at the Lake of the Woods, and the third at Lake Winnipeg. "We ought to try, said Mr. Begon, to make this discovery with 50 Canadians who are more fit than any other nationality, to accomplish it, because they are inured to the hardships of such expeditions and like the work, being also accustomed to the way of living followed by the Indians." Begon understood men and these few lines show fully the superiority of Canadians to undertake explorations in the wilderness. The ability to endure the fatigue, the thousand privations of these distant expeditions, and an unfailing good humor in the midst of the privations inseparable from these difficult voyages, have ever been the distinctive characteristic of our race.

Mr. Begon thought he could complete his plan in two years. It certainly could be done provided a leader could be found who measured up to the requirements of the task. But fifteen years passed before such a man was found.

The Indians took two months to make the trip to Hudson Bay and back to the Lake of the Woods. They insisted that the

French ought to go to them to trade so as to spare them the hardships of the long voyage. If the French would do so, they promised not to go to the sea any more.

ZACHARY ROBUTEL DE LA NOUE, 1717-1721. FORT

CAMANITIGOYA BUILT 1717. JEAN-BAPTISTE DES-
CHAILLONS DE ST. OURS, 1721-1725.

The Court of France listened with favor to the scheme of Mr. Begon. It was approved by the Naval Council in February 3rd, 1717. De la Noue was intrusted with the erection of these posts. Zachary Robutel de la Noue was a Canadian, having been at Montreal. He had taken part in the expedition of Chevalier de Troyes to James Bay in 1686. He was at the head of a detachment of 70 Canadians with Messrs. Ste. Helene d'Iberville and Maricourt. In 1717 the Marquis de Vaudreuil commanded him to carry out the plan just indicated. He left Montreal in July the same year (1717), with eight canoes and repaired to the Kaministigoya river where he built a trading post. (1)

He was the first to found an important trading establishment at that point. Des Groseilliers and Radisson, in 1662, had stopped but a short time at the mouth of the river. They had hurriedly erected a small hut and surrounded it with a stockade bound together. Their only object was to provide shelter in case of bad weather and to guard against a surprise attack by the Sioux, a few scattered parties of whom were still known at that date to range as far as Lake Superior. This poor shelter crumbled after the departure of those two explorers. La Noue, instead of marching forward tried to induce the Indians to come to the post. He next endeavored to induce the Crees of Lake Tekamamiouen (2) (Rainy Lake), to frequent the post the French had erected in their midst. In 1717 la Noue built close to the present Fort Frances a post which he called Tekamamiouen, but he was

(1) Kaministigoya in the Algonquin-Cree dialect means "Island River."

(2) Another Cree dialect, Taki Kimiwen means "It rains all the time."

compelled, chiefly owing to the continual warfare between Crees and Sioux, to abandon it almost.

The Sioux who had been driven back for some years by the Crees, reappeared now at the Lake of the Woods; but they did not dare stop long for the Crees immediately chased them. Rainy Lake was less exposed to the incursions of the Sioux and this explains why La Noue as soon as he had reached Kaministigoya thought it wiser to build a fort at Rainy Lake before proceeding to Lake of the Woods. In order to further his plans he tried to conclude a treaty of peace between these two foes. With this purpose in view he employed the services of an officer named Pachot, who had great influence with the Sioux. At his request Pachot went to Chagoamigon, south of Duluth. On that headland there was a post which Le Gardeur de St. Pierre had built. He wrote by Pachot, to a Sioux chief urging him to bury the hatchet. This attempt at conciliation was without result.

In the meantime, the Sioux surprised a band of Sautaux close to the Kaministigoya post, and killed 17. The Sautaux angered by this act of perfidy, swore to be revenged. It was because of this that La Noue was compelled to postpone the settlement of a post at Rainy Lake. He suggested that an officer be sent to the Sioux at St. Anthony's Falls to pacify them while he himself went to the Crees at Rainy Lake with the same purpose.

We see by a letter of Pachot, dated 1722, that the easiest way to go west was thought to be through a small river called "Nantouagane," which he gives out as being about 7 leagues from Kaministigoya. Pachot was then mapping the course of the Pigeon river which later on became the usual-route to reach the western prairies.

The mistake as regards the distance between Kaministigoya and Pigeon which is 15 leagues instead of 7 can easily be accounted for. Pachot, later on, in 1731, was the companion of Linctot in his voyage to Fort Beauharnois.

Consequently La Noue did not proceed any farther than the post he had established at Kaministigoya river, and which he had named "Camanitigoya." He was promoted to the rank of captain. During the summer of 1721 the governor, noticing that the enterprise did not go forward, appointed in his place captain Des-

challons de Saint Ours. The latter followed the example of La Noue and was satisfied with increasing the trade at Fort Camanigoya. He was still there in 1725 when he was removed to other posts. In 1728 he was appointed to the command of Detroit along with de Noyelles who was later on to be the successor of La Vérendrye.

It is only just to concede that La Noue and de Saint Ours, in spite of their failure to compass the end for which they had been sent, were gallant soldiers who had distinguished themselves by their courage. To prove this, one instance will be enough : de Saint Ours, in the winter of 1694-5 led a party of Indians right to the gates of Orange and returned to camp with a number of prisoners.

GREAT IMPORTANCE OF LAKE NEPIGON POSTS. PLAN OF DE LA VERENDRYE'S EXPEDITION. NECESSITY OF FORT BEAUHARNOIS AND OF MAKING PEACE BETWEEN INDIAN TRIBES.

This was the condition of affairs when La Vérendrye was sent to Lake Nepigon in 1727. It so happened that the posts at this lake were nearest to the English forts at Hudson Bay, and in order to compete successfully with them the French needed to be led by an energetic and tactful commander, so as to induce the Crees to come to Lake Nepigon. By entrusting him with this strategical location, the government was thus giving him the means to prepare for his great discoveries. He profited by his leisure, when not attending to trade, to gather considerable information as to the means of getting farther into the heart of the country, and reaching the goal aimed at by all the explorers of this epoch, the Western sea. He saw clearly that in order to stop the boats of the savages who every year took their furs to the forts on the Bay, it was necessary to establish posts farther west on the great lakes which empty into Hudson Bay. To attain in this object the consent of the governor and of the Court of France were indispensable. For that purpose he gathered data based on the reports of the Indians. From what has been stated in this work,

it is plain that the way was pretty well known as far as the Lake of the Woods; but that to penetrate farther the information available was unreliable and often wrong. He was most painstaking in mapping out his proposed route through the intricate labyrinth of rivers and lakes which covered the immense territory he intended to explore. The project of discovering an inland passage to the Pacific Ocean and thence to China had for many years been the daily thought of the Court of France. Memoirs under this head had reached it in the reigns of Henry IV, Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

D'Iberville had offered to attempt the discovery of the western sea through Hudson Bay. His arguments were based on the testimony of Jérémie who had been in command at Fort Nelson, and he went on to say that the latter had informed him he had sent an expedition to Lac des Assiniboels from which the Bourbon river flows, that silver had been brought back from that lake and that he had been assured this lake was in a very fine country. (1)

On December 7, 1717, Messrs Vaudreuil and Bégon informed the Court of France that to establish posts at Kaministigoya, Rainy Lake and Lake Winnipeg would cost 50,000 livres and they insisted that it was incumbent on the king if he wanted this discovery to be prosecuted; to lay out the money out of his own purse. (2) These two officers were in possession of all the necessary information and could give out the only way to achieve the discovery. The Minister of Colonies was deaf to all suggestions that such a noble enterprise be financed. The only purpose of the great voyage of Father Charlevoix was to advise the Naval Council as to the best route to be selected to reach the western sea. Father Charlevoix reached Canada in September 23, 1720. It was in this very year that a band of Sioux slaughtered seventeen Sauteurs close to Fort Kaministigoya.

In the spring of the following year Father Charlevoix went

(1) *Essai sur Charlevoix*, J. Edmond Roy, R.S.C., 1907, p. 90.

(2) *Margry*, vol. 6, pp. 505, 506.

to Michillimakinac, June 30, and then visited the Illinois and Louisiana. (1)

On his return to France, Father Charlevoix sent a report, dated April 1, 1723, to the Comte de Morville, minister and secretary of State, in which he was concluding that to discover the Western sea there were only two practical ways :

"The first is to ascend the Missouri, whose source is certainly not far from the sea; and the second is to establish a mission among the Sioux, who, waging war with the Assiniboels, of whom they doubtless make some prisoners. These prisoners would be accustomed to tarding with the Aïouez who inhabit the Missouri valley and know all about the highest watershed. The missionaries will get, through these savages, whose language they could quickly learn, all the information needed."

The king made up his mind to send two missionaries among the Sioux and not to prosecute the discovery of the Western sea, as he hoped to get from these missionaries such information as would enable the court to decide what would be the best course to take for the future. (2)

To carry out this project the Sioux Company was organized on June 6, 1737, at Montreal. The charter of that company bears the signatures of the Marquis de Beauharnois, Longueuil, La Corne, D'Aigremont, Saint George Dupré, Youville, Pierre d'Ail-

(1) Before this voyage of Father Charlevoix, the Jesuits were anxious to get farther inland to the west. Canadian traders were of the same mind as they expected to increase their trading receipts by means of these discoveries. But another section composed chiefly of civil servants and soldiers favored the scheme of going farther into Ohio and the lands bordering the Mississippi, being no doubt induced to this view by the mildness of the climate. In consequence, travellers used to stop at Michillimakinac and then took the route of lake Michigan. At the outset the government of Canada approved the expeditions in this direction. Several forts were built on that route while only feeble attempts were made to penetrate west of Lake Superior, on the north at least. The missionaries in the end had the best of it and more attention was paid to the Canadian North-West. Nevertheless there was great hesitancy at the Court of France as to what ought to be done. Charlevoix who had lived in Canada from 1705 to 1709, was directed to make inquiries on the spot. He never reached any farther than Michillimakinac, but he met there some traders from Lake Superior and collected information on the project of an expedition into the west. (*Essai sur Charlevoix*, J. Edmond Roy, R.S.C., 1907, p. 34.)

(2) Margry, pp. 532, 534, 536.

lay, Marin, Etienne Petit, Garrau, François Campeau, François du May, Pierre Richard, Jean-Baptiste Boucher de Montbrun, François Boucher de Montbrun and Jean Garrau. (1)

September 18, 1727, Fort Beauharnois was begun. It was completed in four days. (2)

This fort was an inclosure 100 feet square surrounded with stakes 12 feet high, with three buildings, 25, 30 and 38 feet long and 16 feet wide, and two towers. (3)

The first association having partly dissolved, another was formed June 6, 1731.

From a report by the Marquis de Beauharnois, and of Hocquart, dated October 12, 1731, it looks as if Fort Beauharnois had been momentarily abandoned or at least had fallen into neglect, owing to the proximity of the Renards through whose lands the French were obliged to pass.

Thus it was when La Vérendrye arrived on the scene. We will see him in his attempt to cross the continent in search of the western sea of which so much had been heard at the Court of France for so many years. He would have had the glorious distinction of accomplishing that grand achievement had death not intervened so early.

La Vérendrye realized that if he would be a successful discoverer, he must pacify the Indians. For this reason he urged the importance of maintaining Fort Beauharnois founded by Boucher de la Perrière in 1727, at Lake Pepin, in the heart of Sioux territory, to restrain the Sioux, while he went into the Christineaux country in an effort to disarm them. (4) In fact he was going to meet the Assiniboines, a branch of the Sioux though separated from the rest of the nation, at Lake Winnipeg. He had to travel along the border of Sioux territory. In order therefore not to interrupt his journey or expose him to sudden attacks it was a

(1) Margry, 547, 552.

(2) The first commandant of this fort was René Boucher, Sieur de la Perrière. It was built on low ground at Point au Sable, on the west bank of Lake Pepin, near Frontenac, in Goodhue county. Linctot rebuilt it on higher ground. (*The Aborigines of Minnesota*, 1911, p. 530.)

(3) Margry, p. 556.

(4) Margry, p. 568.

sort of necessity that the war between these two nations be stopped. Unfortunately, the commanders at Fort Beauharnois, Linctot from 1731 to 1735, and Le Gardeur de St. Pierre from 1735 to 1737, were not able to make friends with the Sioux, and on May 30, 1737, this fort was abandoned. We shall see later how hostilities between these two nations were the cause of the deaths of young La Vérendrye, Father Aulneau and 19 of their party, in 1736, and the distress which befell forts St. Charles and La Reine for lack of supplies.

PACCO, LEFOYE AND LE PETIT JOUR. (1)

The first information which La Vérendrye got had been received from three Cree Chiefs, Pacco, Lefoye and his brother, Le Petit Jour, from Lake Nepigon. They pretended to have travelled beyond the height of land to a great river which flowed west and became wider and wider as it flowed to the sea. This river had only one fall, they said, which was situated three days' march from its source. The river flowed through a flat country heavily treed for 600 miles. The Assiniboines and Sioux lived along its banks, villages and towns being scattered along it. Below, 900 miles on, there were Indians constantly remaining on their lands. As there was a scarcity of timber, these tribes lived in earthen huts.

No timber was growing from the shores of a great lake which was an outlet of the river 600 miles from its source. On the left down the river, on leaving Lake Outran, there was a small river, the water of which looked red, of a vermillion shade. On the same side of this river, but much lower down, was a hill, the stones of which were shining at night as well as by day. It was called by the Indians, the dwelling of the Spirit and no one dared go near it.

The Red River wears out of the sides of this hill in certain places a fine sand which contains a metal that looks like gold. A great many of the tribes living between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Nepigon, knew of this river. Lake Outran which is here mentioned is evidently Lake Winnipeg and the little river on the left is

(1) *Histoire des Canadiens-Français*.—B. Sulte, vol. VI.

the Red, the waters of which, however, notwithstanding the report of Pacco, even if you are endowed with the most fanciful imagination, would not look much like vermilion.

As for the little mountain, might it not be by chance, Pembina Mountain? A little river, called the Pembina, takes its rise there and flows into the Red River. So far as the rest of the narrative is concerned it is pure Cree imagination.

TACCHIGIS. (*)

This Indian was a distinguished Cree chief. His testimony shows that he was a keen observer and personally acquainted with a great part of the west. Tacchigis, writes La Vérendrye, told me last autumn, (1727), that he had travelled as far as the lake of the great river. He says he saw from the top of the height of land on the south west, four great rivers that have their source there. One of them flows north to empty into the great western river and then west into the big lake. Another flows north east and emptying into a river flowing west, and into the same lake. A third takes a southeastern direction and then goes inward the Spanish settlement. The fourth and last flows between the two last mentioned and runs south east.

On the Missouri plateau, however, you find an elevation from which flow if not four at least two rivers, which flow in opposite directions and almost immediately divided into four. The two sources, the headwaters of two rivers which water half a continent, are but a few acres apart. The first growing larger as it proceeds, forms the Souris which empties into the Assiniboine which in its turn joins the Red and finally reaches the Lake of the big river, Lake Winnipeg. The "great river" is none other than the Winnipeg river which carries the waters of the Lake of the Woods to Lake Winnipeg.

About 70 miles above where Lake Winnipeg flows into Grand Playgreen lake, there is the Grand Rapids, where the waters of the North and South Saskatchewan, rising in the summit of the Rockies, augmented by those of Lake Manitoba, Winnipegosis

(*) *Histoire des Canadiens-Français*.—B. Sulte, vol. VI.

and Bourbon (Cedar), tumble in foaming torrents into Lake Winnipeg. As Tacchigis said on this route one could take a western course. This was the very route which up to the advent of the railway, was frequented by most travellers and missionaries. The second river, which flows more to the north, reaches the South Saskatchewan after watering a very large expanse of country. The third and fourth meet and flow into the Missouri the largest tributary of the Mississippi. With a piece of charcoal Tacchigis drew a map of the rivers and lakes which he had described. In the main design, the map gave La Vérendrye a pretty fair general idea of the location of the chief rivers of the west.

GRAPEAU'S SLAVE.

Grapeau was an aged Cree chief who had been presented by the man of the tribe with a very intelligent slave. Before falling into the hands of the Crees, the slave had been a captive of the Assiniboines. He told La Vérendrye that he had seen, on the left bank of the great western river, many villages two leagues in length. The inhabitants of those villages gathered grain and fruit in large quantities. Game was plentiful in that country but the people knew nothing of gun-powder. Neither canoes nor timber were found there. To cook their food the natives burned dried buffalo dung. He had several times, he said, gone to the mountain in whose stones shone night and day. From there one could observe the ebb and flow of the tide of the sea. No Indian huts were to be found between the lake near the Red River and a point much farther down than the mountain. Such was the account of this captive. It is most likely that he meant the villages of the Mandanes and the Rocky Mountains. (1)

(1) *Histoire des Canadiens-Français*.—B. Sulte, vol. V.

OCHAKAH THE GUIDE. FURTHER INFORMATION. HE
CHOOSES THE PIGEON RIVER ROUTE. MEETS
FATHER DE GONNOR TO WHOM HE ENTRUSTS
HIS MEMOIRS.

La Vérendrye had won the friendship of an Indian named Ochukah who had travelled considerably about the Lake of the Woods. This man was most devoted to him and that is why he chose him as guide for his expedition. The Indians were all of the same conviction that there were three routes to the greater river of the west, Winnipeg. They were water routes and Ochukah drew on a piece of beech bark a sketch of them, for La Vérendrye.

On this map, the Pigeon river is indicated by the name "Nantahavagne". Going up this river one reaches Long, Plat, Sasakinage and Tekamamiouen (Rainy) lakes. Lake of the Woods appears on the map but without any name. The Pigeon river, with its 22 rapids, might have had some terrors for La Vérendrye, but it was, nevertheless, the easiest route. The Kaministigoya river on which de Noyon and La Noue had travelled, offered still more discouraging obstacles. The third and last route, from the west end of Lake Nepigon, was almost impracticable. La Vérendrye decided in favor of the Pigeon River route. The Indians told La Vérendrye that they had once been accustomed to go to Hudson Bay by the Pigeon river route, but it happened on one trip that their canoes had been shattered by the ice floes when ten days march from Lake Winnipeg and the party had been all drowned. Since that wreck they had abandoned the Pigeon River route. This accident probably took place at the north end of Lake Winnipeg where large floes of ice are sometimes found later than the middle of June. The Crees of Lake Nepigon had since then reached James Bay by following the rivers that flow north from the lake. It is a common experience that tragic events leave a lasting impression on the minds of the natives. Though on the one hand they give proof of the most admirable patience under the difficulties that oppose them on their expeditions, it is none the less true, on the other hand that misfortunes demoralize and discourage them entirely. It is enough

to make them avoid a place permanently if one of their number there meets a serious accident. For such a reason the Indians had stopped going down to Hudson Bay by the Nelson River, going instead by the Hayes river which is longer and at least as dangerous, for a number of Indians lost their lives in one of its rapids.

"The Indians assure me," says La Vérendrye in his memoirs, "that we can get from Lake Superior to Lake Tehamamiouen in twenty days and that in four days more we can reach the Lake of the Woods, where we will establish a depot. From the lake of the Woods, to the Nepigon Lake (Winnipeg), the right bank is occupied by Crees and the left by the Assiniboines and the Sioux. In this region buffalo are plentiful. The Crees barter their goods with other Indian tribes and the furs of the Sioux are taken by the Crees to the English at Hudson Bay."

De Noyon had visited Rainy River before La Vérendrye, and up to that point the route was pretty well known. From Rainy River to Lake Winnipeg La Vérendrye would be guided by the sufficiently explicit narratives of the Crees; but the whole country to the west was only known to him by very vague reports which were inadequate to enable him to select a route. Once at Lake Winnipeg he had to find his bearings from information obtained on the spot. He had obtained, as we have seen, rough maps from the natives, and he would have to consult these rough sketches, comparing them with the country.

During the summer of 1728, he studied his plan of exploration and compiled a detailed memoir. He went down to Michilimakinac to exchange the furs he had collected during the winter for further supplies to continue trading at Lake Nepigon. There he met Father de Gonnor, who was returning from among the Sioux, where he had been sent as a missionary in 1727, and was also seeking the western sea.

Rev. Father de Gonnor had left Montreal on June 16, 1727, with Father Guignas. About the middle of the summer of 1728, with M. de la Perrière, he left Fort Beauharnois where he had contracted an internal disease which was considered serious. (*)

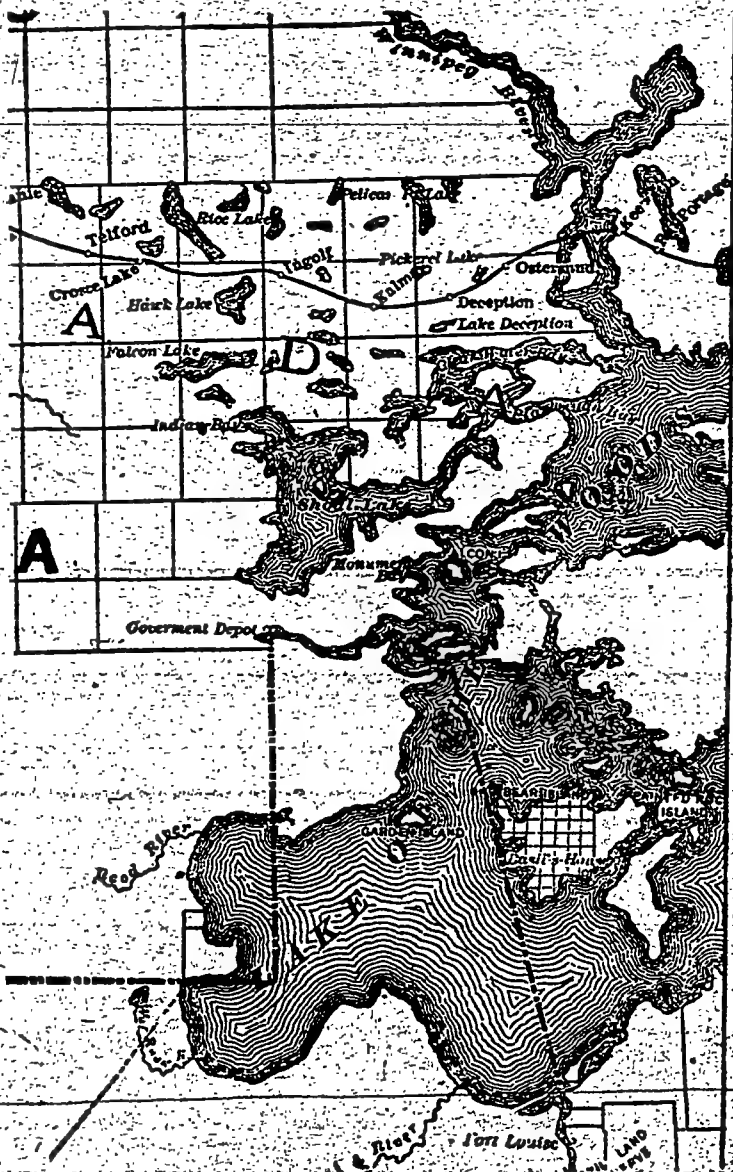
(*) *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France*, par le P. C. de Rochemonteix, vol. 1, p. 202.

Fathers de Gonnor and Guignas had been sent among the Sioux to try the plan suggested by Father Charlevoix in 1723. La Vérendrye met Father de Gonnor at Michillimakinac. La Vérendrye informed him of his plans and gave him his memoir with a request to forward it to the governor and ask for the necessary authority and assistance to enable him to embark upon his enterprise.

FATHER NICHOLAS DE GONNOR, S.J. HIS PLANS APPROVED. THE RIGHTS OF TRADING

This clergyman was born in the diocese of Luçon, France, on November 19, 1691, and entered the Society of Jesus at Bordeaux, September 11, 1710. He reached Canada in 1726. He was sent as a missionary among the Sioux in the year following. Later on he resided at Sault St. Louis. During the summer of 1736, he wrote to one of his brethren in France a very interesting letter in which he describes the martyrdom of Father Aulneau. He was then incumbent of Notre-Dame de Lorette. In 1728 he sailed for La Rochelle. He returned to Canada in 1740 and after serving in succession as parish priest of Lorette, Montreal, Sault St. Louis and Quebec, he died in the last named city in December 16, 1759. The Indians called him "Sarenhès", the "big tree", on account of his great height.

This missionary left for Montreal being the bearer of the documents entrusted to him by La Vérendrye. We have proof that he was in Montreal in August 1728. He gave the governor, Marquis de Beauharnois, La Vérendrye's memoir and strongly recommended it. He showed that it would be much better to set up establishments among the Crees and Assiniboels, if we wished to discover the western seas, as was intended, than to remain among the Sioux. Having this purpose in mind he wrote a report entitled: "Narrative concerning a great tidal river, written by Father de Gonnor, a Jesuit missionary among the Sioux, November 3, 1728." (The name of this priest is written in various ways, de Gonnor, de Gonor, and Degonnor.) The governor saw at once that La Vérendrye was the man for the work and invited him to Quebec to discuss his plans and explain the map drawn by his



THE LAKE OF THE WOODS.

guide, Ochaka. After several interviews with La Vérendrye, the governor promised to use all his influence at court to bring the enterprise to a successful end.

M. de Beauharnois, with his engineer, Chaussegros de Léry, went over the memoir and the map La Vérendrye left with him. This examination convinced him that, without minimizing the difficulties to be overcome, the scheme was capable of successful execution. He granted the permission to build a post at Lake Winnipeg, and gave him 50 earnest men and one missionary. He directed him, before penetrating farther into the west, to examine the territory carefully and establish himself on good terms with the natives. In order to enable him to meet the enormous expenses of this first post, he allowed him the profits that might accrue from the fur trade. (*Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France*, vol. 1, p. 204.)

He asked, in France, for sufficient financial support to ensure the success of the project. They granted, in Paris, merely their approval of the scheme and allowed La Vérendrye the privilege of trading. Messrs. de Beauharnois and Hocquart had forwarded to M. de Maurepas, minister of the navy, La Vérendrye's memoirs on the intended expedition of discovery, the map of the native Ochakah, their remarks and their resolutions. According to the historian Garneau, Father de Gonnor is supposed to have gone to Paris himself and to have handed these memoirs to the government. Mr. de Maurepas handed the whole of the documents to Father de Charlevoix.

The memoir of Father de Charlevoix dated 1731, is to be found in the archives of the ministry for the colonies. This is the way it begins: "It is over a year since the views of Mr. de La Vérendrye respecting the western sea have been submitted to me. (*) On many points they confirm the observations which I made at the time of my voyage and I have understood the reasoning of this officer, who is spoken of favorably in Canada, and who is looked upon as being very fit to undertake the expedition he recommends."

Next to this beginning, Father de Charlevoix gives his opinion

(*) *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France*, p. 204.

on the several divisions of the plan. He thinks that the projected establishments spoken of by this officer are pretty useless as they will delay the expedition and may have for their only fruits, a certain amount of fur trading. According to his idea the discovery should be attempted without delay, not to be put off more than two years and that merely to secure new information from the advanced posts concerning the route to be followed. By acting thus the expenses required by the expedition would amount to a few provisions which are easily carried, ammunition, a part of which would be used in hunting, and a few presents for the Indians. (**)

Father de Charlevoix suggested that the members of the expedition might be selected among the cadets, young Canadian officers and the sergeants of the army. He desired them to appoint as their guides two or three Abenakis who were people to be trusted and were courageous as well as faithful.

La Vérendrye had asked for 70 or 80 men that he might push the enterprise to a successful conclusion. A second memoir was forwarded to Quebec by La Vérendrye in 1729. Another was prepared for the ministers in the early months of 1730. After reading these documents Mr. de Maurepas wrote himself a memoir that was submitted to the council of ministers. In 1730 or 1731 the governor received the reply of Mr. de Maurepas. (*) In this document the only thing the council of ministers did was to say that they considered the views of La Vérendrye pretty reasonable, even capable of execution, when the time arrived that money could be spent for such an object.

The governor decided not to wait any longer. When the reply of Mr. de Maurepas reached Governor de Beauharnois, La Vérendrye had already left for the west. The governor took it upon himself to write the minister of colonies that since the king did not want to burden himself with the expenses of the expedition the only way to support it was to grant its leader the privilege of trading. He told the minister that La Vérendrye had chosen with care the men who were fit to undertake such a voyage, and that

(**) Idem, pp. 206 and 207.

(*) *Les Héros de la Nouvelle-France*, Kastner, pp. 54 et 55.

the Crees of Lake Superior would be, by far, more useful than the Abenakis, since they inhabited the country adjacent to the lands which were to be explored.

La Vérendrye, who was in command at Lake Nepigon, was instructed to build a fort at Rainy Lake, another at the Lake of the Woods and a third at Lake Winnipeg. In these advanced posts he could procure more reliable information about the west before venturing farther and he could conciliate the Assiniboines whose territory he had to cross.

Moreover, he was to neglect no opportunity to profit by trade in order to liquidate the expenses of his expedition, for these profits were to be his sole resource. It may be the proper place to remark here that at that time the west and northwest of America from California to Hudson Bay as well as north east Asia, were as yet unknown. Several learned men taught that both continents were joined together by lands which they called "Bourbonia." France wanted the glory of solving this problem. By giving a friendly ear to the plans of La Vérendrye, those at the French court thought they would be able to raise the veil that hid the limits of both continents.

LA VERENDRYE'S DEPARTURE FOR THE NORTH- WEST. ERECTION OF FORT ST. PIERRE BY HIS NEPHEW LA JEMMERAYE IN 1731.

On May 19, 1731, La Vérendrye signed a deed of partnership with a few business men who advanced him the merchandise and outfit required for his expedition. The governor had caused the following clause to be inserted in the deed: "A fort of several rows of stakes shall be built, also a chapel, a house for the commanding officer and one for the missionary."

Mr. de Chassaigne, governor of Montreal, was present on that important occasion. An agreement had been made before this at Quebec providing that one or several posts would be built as need should be felt and as they advanced, and that the explorer and his partners would recoup themselves for such expenses out of the profits of the fur trading monopoly in those places. Mr. de Beau-

harnois was sanguine that, once the explorers had settled in the heart of the new lands, the minister would be induced to assist them and would provide the means to carry the expedition through to the coast. (*)

On June 8, 1731, La Vérendrye left Montreal with about 50 men whom he had engaged, and his three sons, Jean-Baptiste, Pierre and François. At Michillimakinac he secured Father Mesaiger, S.J., to administer to his men and the savages whom he was going to visit, the spiritual comforts of which they stood in need.

From there he went to the Grand Portage, at the mouth of the Pigeon river, about 15 leagues southwest of the Kaministiquia river. Here we find him August 26, 1731. He started out the next day to row up the Pigeon river. His men, frightened by the length of the portage, about three leagues, mutinied on him and refused to accompany him farther. Confronted with this discouraging state of affairs, he decided to pick out the best disposed members of his expedition and send them on ahead. With the assistance of Father Mesaiger he succeeded in getting together enough men to fill four birch bark canoes and an experienced guide to lead that party. He entrusted this vanguard to his nephew Christopher Dufrost de La Jemmeraye who was his lieutenant. He directed him to go to Rainy Lake and build a fort there.

La Jemmeraye was only 22 years old, but he had already, in the Sioux country, given proof of his worth. He started off, accompanied by Jean-Baptiste, eldest son of the explorer.

As early as the autumn of 1731 he reached Rainy river and built Fort St. Pierre, the ruins of which can still be seen. The name was given the fort in honor of the chief of the expedition. It was built at the mouth of Rainy Lake in a cove of the river of the same name, within four or five acres of where the lake empties into the river and about two miles east of Fort Frances. At the exact point where the waters of the lake pour foaming into the river there is a cone shaped hillock said to have been erected by the Mandanes. From the top of this elevation, as from an observatory, the eye can range far out over Rainy lake.

(*) *Les Héros de la Nouvelle-France*, pp. 55 et 56.

The Monsonis had erected a large number of huts at the foot of the fall at Fort Frances where they caught large quantities of fish. As we can see, the location of this fort was intelligently chosen. The proximity of a good fishing ground gave La Jemmeraye the certainty of never lacking fish. During the following winter he was busy trading. Early in the spring he took leave of the natives and told them that he would soon return accompanied by the leader of the expedition. He set out for the Grand Portage which he reached on May 29th, 1732.

La Vérendrye, who had wintered at the post of Kaministigoya, awaited him impatiently. The success of this journey encouraged him to proceed. On June 8, 1732, he left for the west with Father Mésaiger, La Jemmeraye, two of his children and seven canoes. The eldest of his sons, Jean-Baptiste, had gone to Michillimackinac with a few furs, the result of the winter's hunt, or obtained by barter with the Cree Indians. Another purpose of his journey had been to fetch the merchandise sent from Montreal. It took him six months to make this trip. (*)

La Vérendrye's journey, though difficult, was made without accident. On arriving at Fort St. Pierre, on July 14, 1732, he found a great gathering of Indians waiting for him.

FORT ST. CHARLES. DESCRIPTION OF THIS FORT.

The Indians welcomed him with great demonstrations of joy. After an exchange of presents, La Vérendrye went down the Rainy river and entered the Lake of the Woods, accompanied by fifty canoes. He laid his course to the west shore and there built a second fort according to the directions he had received.

The site of this fort was chosen on the advice of Father Mésaiger. It was named St. Charles in honor of that missionary of the party (Charles Michael Mésaiger) and of Marquis Charles Beauharnois, his protector.

This fort was built of timber and only a few traces of it remain. Everything has been swept away by fire. La Vérendrye relates that this fort was 80 leagues from Fort St. Pierre and 7

(*) *Les Héros de la Nouvelle-France*, p. 58.

leagues from Massacre Island. Father Aulneau, in one of his letters, describes it as located one league inside a bay between 60 and 70 leagues from Rainy lake and in the southwest part of the Lake of the Woods. By virtue of this information and by a tradition religiously preserved among the Sauteux of the Lake of the Woods, there is not the least doubt in our day of the location of Fort St. Charles and the identity of Massacre Island. Crosses have been erected at both places to mark their genuineness and as testimony to the faith of those pious discoverers.

The ruins of Fort St. Charles were discovered and identified during a search that was made in August 1908. The credit of this satisfactory discovery must be given in the first place to His Grace Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface, who made great monetary sacrifices to organize several expeditions for this purpose. He was generously supported in the task by the Jesuit Fathers, the Oblate Fathers, a few secular priests and some laymen. The fort is situated on the south bank of Angle river of the North-West; about two miles west from *American Point* on sec. 24, tp. 168, r. 34, west of the 5th Meridian.

Here is the description given by Father Aulneau, of this fort: "It is built of four rows of piles between 12 and 15 feet high, and is in the form of a parallelogram. It was but an enclosure inside which a few huts of square logs, calked with earth and covered with bark. It is about a league from... (This part of the manuscript has been affected by the weather and reduced to dust) from 60 to 70 leagues to the southwest of the Lake of the Woods."

In a memoir forwarded from Paris by Mr. Leau and published on March 15, 1908, in *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface*, we read the following description: "La Vérendrye has built another fort on the west of the Lake of the Woods, 60 leagues from Lake Tekamamiouen (Rainy Lake). This fort is 100 feet wide with four towers. In it is a house for the missionary, a church, another house for the commanding officer, four corner buildings with chimneys, a gunpowder magazine and a warehouse. There are

also two gates opposite each other, a sentry box, and the piles are 15 feet high. (1)

Fort St. Charles was 100 feet in length from north to south and 60 feet wide. The opening of the fort faces north on a cove full of wild oats just as when La Vérendrye was there.

The fishing and hunting grounds are excellent all along the course of this river, which long had enjoyed a great reputation, being the terminus of the canoe route to the Dawson Road. A few acres from this fort is Famine Island (Buckete.)

For further details of this fort we direct the reader to the number of *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface*, of September 15, 1908, which has an article that has been reproduced in the Bulletin of the Historical Society of St. Boniface, of 1911.

The Crees and Monsonis inhabiting the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake district traded with La Vérendrye. The former had 200 warriors at Lake of the Woods and sixty at Lake Winnipeg.

La Vérendrye becoming anxious on account of the delayed return of his eldest son, who as already related, had gone to Michillimakinac, sent his nephew La Jemmeraye to meet him. They both reached Fort St. Charles on November 12th, 1732. They walked on the ice as their men had been obliged to leave the canoes ten leagues from the fort.

La Vérendrye intended to build, in the spring of 1733, another fort close to the Assiniboels on Lake Winnipeg; but those of his associates who had wintered with him to watch the trading, told him he could not undertake anything till the canoes he had to send to Kaministogoya and Michillimakinac should return.

He decided to dispatch La Jemmeraye to the governor with a report of what had been accomplished, telling also the manner he had been received by the natives. He was bearer also of a map showing the new countries recently discovered, with a table of the nations inhabiting them. He left Fort St. Charles on May 27th. Father Mesaiger being sick resolved to avail himself of this opportunity to return to Montreal.

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society, St. Boniface*, vol 1, p. 54.

FATHER CHARLES MICHEL MESAIGER, S.J.

This Jesuit was the first priest to visit the Lake of the Woods. He is therefore the dean of the St. Boniface-archdiocese clergy. He was born in France on March 7th, 1690, and was received into the Society of Jesus September 19, 1706. He landed in Canada in 1722 and was at once sent as a missionary among the Outaouais. He took his four final vows at St. Ignace des Outaouais February 2nd, 1726. The following year his superiors sent him with the Algonquin missions to the Miamis. Later on we find him again at Fort St. Charles with La Vérendrye who had brought him along from Fort Michillimackinac in 1731. Father Mesaiger wintered with La Vérendrye at Kaministogoya during 1731-32, and at Fort St. Charles the year following. The Cree to whom he had come to preach the gospel were wandering tribes, living from hand to mouth, on the game they killed or the fish they caught. They were compelled by scarcity of food to stay near the fort only for a very short time. It is therefore easy to understand how that excellent missionary under those circumstances, could make but very little progress in imparting religious instruction to such neophytes. Moreover he was very far from enjoying sufficient health to withstand the hardship which are the lot of this kind of travel. His health was so undermined on account of the privations he had to undergo that he was obliged to go back. He therefore left for Montreal in the spring of 1735 and thence was sent to Quebec in 1735. There we find him registered as an invalid. From 1736 to 1741 he was teacher of mathematics at Quebec college. In 1741 he became procurator with the additional office of prefect of studies. In 1740, Rev. Father Saint-Pè, superior of the Jesuit Missions in Canada, was obliged to go away. He took his place for a time in this year. In the same year he was also rector of the college of Quebec. Through infirmity he was obliged to return to France in 1749. In 1756 we find him at the house of professed Fathers of his order in Paris. He died at Rouen on August 7th, 1766.

1733—1734.

WAR BETWEEN THE TRIBES OF THE NORTH AND THOSE OF THE SOUTH—TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF THE LAKE OF THE WOODS—MAIZE AND PEA HARVEST—MARIN URTUBISE IN COMMAND AT FORT ST. PIERRE—A BAND OF ASSINIBOINES AND CREES VISITS FORT ST. CHARLES—INFORMATION RESPECTING THE MANDANS—DEPARTURE ON MARCH 9TH, 1734, OF TWO FRENCHMEN FOR LAKE WINNIPEG AND THE RED RIVER TO SELECT A SITE FOR A FORT—JEAN-BAPTISTE DE LA VÉRENDRYE ACCOMPANIES A WAR EXPEDITION AS COUNCILLOR—FORT AUX ROSEAUX IS BEGUN SOMETIME NEAR AUGUST 1734 AND FORT MAUREPAS IS BUILT IN THE AUTUMN OF 1734—FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES—THE DISCOVERER SETS BACK FOR MONTREAL IN THE SUMMER OF 1734.

One of the great difficulties encountered by La Vérendrye during his expeditions was the hereditary hatred that the Indian tribes nursed in their hearts and which kept them ever ready to strike. They gather incessantly, says La Vérendrye, in war bands that fight with the other tribes. A very strange fact was that the Sauteux belonged to the same race as the Crees and spoke a similar dialect, but were allied to the Sioux; and the Assiniboinés, who were next of kin to the Sioux were comrades in arms of the Crees and the Monsonis and fought the Sioux and Sauteux. The northern Indians had made an alliance to drive back those of the south. It was a duel to the death. On June 15th the Monsonis, numbering 300 warriors, arrived at Fort St. Charles. On the next day, 500 Crees joined them. La Vérendrye sat in council and advised them to give up their warlike designs on their foes. By his orders, and with a view to inducing them to trust in him, flint-locks, powder and ball were distributed to them as well as knives, daggers, tinder boxes and tobacco.

All the expostulations of La Vérendrye did not prevent the Monsonis from scalping one of their enemies or the Crees from

(Note.—*Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface*, vol. I, pp. 6 to 24, 54, 55, 56 and 57.)

continuing their expedition. Having travelled twenty days through the prairies these 500 Crees caught sight of the smoke of a Sioux village. A band of 30 warriors belonging to the latter pounced on them from behind and slaughtered four Crees. The Crees then rushed to the attack. The Sioux fled, leaving behind part of their arms and took refuge in a secluded wood in the middle of the plain; and fought there till night came on, the Crees fighting in the open like brave men, the Sioux behind the trees. The Sioux lost 12 men and some wounded. The darkness having put an end to the fighting, the Cree chief cried out: "Who is it that is killing us?" The Sioux chief replied: "The French Sioux." The Cree replied: "We are French Crees, why do you kill us? We are brothers and children of the same father." It was indeed true that the Sioux traded at Fort Beauharnois with the French. This short colloquy put an end to the fight. Their mutual friendship for the French was the cause of burying the hatchet for the present at least. On July 18th, the Crees had returned to Fort St. Charles, having travelled ten days. They were very sorrowful, because they had lost four of their warriors, one of them being the son of a great chief. They had also five wounded. At this point La Vérendrye remarks that it was the custom of the Indians returning from a fight, to march day and night, probably for fear of pursuit by their enemies. On August 10th, (1733), three canoes from Fort Kaministogoya, loaded with merchandise, reached Fort St. Charles, which was at that date the most important post in the west.

On August 29th, 150 canoes, each bearing 2 or 5 Indians, reached Fort St. Charles. They were Crees and Monsonis who brought meat, moose and buffalo fat, bear grease and wild oats to trade. La Vérendrye was getting short of merchandise in his fort and on September 8th, he despatched one of his sons to Fort St. Pierre to meet six canoes from Montreal bearing merchandise for trade. The first four canoes arrived on September 28th and the other two on October 2nd, being escorted by all the Monsonis they had met on the way. La Vérendrye's son placed Fort St. Pierre under Marin Urtubise with twelve men and the necessary provisions for the winter. He reached Fort St. Charles with the rest of the men on October 12th.

The spring rains (1733) were so heavy as to partly drown out the wild oats on which La Vérendrye relied to provision his fort.

La Vérendrye usually brought from the east to feed his people, only maize and coffee. The game he found in the bush and the fish from the lake were providential sources of his food supply.

It is easily understood, under the circumstances, how important it was for him to gather, in the bays of the Lake of the Woods, a large harvest of wild oats, which provided him with a substitute for bread. This grain, when boiled, tastes something like tapioca and is very nourishing.

To avoid an enforced fast, La Vérendrye sent ten of his men to establish themselves on the eastern shore of the lake, 26 leagues across at the mouth of a river that enters the lake from the north-east, (probably Grasse River.) He provided them with nets so that they might fish. It was luck too, for in the autumn they took more than 4,000 white fishes, many trouts and sturgeons. This division came back to the fort on May 2nd, 1734, having made a splendid living off the product of the chase.

La Vérendrye took every means to improve the condition of his men. For instance, in the spring of 1733 he had sown a field of maize and peas. The maize had to be given to the Indians who were starving through the failure of the wild oats, but he nevertheless got ten bushels of peas from the single bushel he sowed.

In the spring of 1734 he increased the size of the field under crop and sowed the ten bushels of peas with whatever maize he had been able to save. The explorer added to his fame by becoming the first agriculturist of the west. He did more. He distributed part of his seed grain among the Indians and exhorted them to sow it. "I have induced two families of Indians," he says, "by earnest solicitation, to sow maize. I trust that the benefits they will derive therefrom, will induce others to follow their example." This encouragement thus given by the explorer to the cultivation of the soil bore good fruit.

On the reserve of Chief Andigomigawinini, opposite Fort St. Charles, as well as in the recesses of the Angle river at the point where the Dawson Road begins, on the reserve of the great chief Powassin, the redskins continue to sow pretty large fields of cereals.

Further, to the south of Massacre Island, is an island called "Cornfield," because the Sauteux used to sow maize on it.

On December 28th, (1733,) two Monsonis delivered to the explorer, a letter from Urtubise informing him that 300 Monsonis warriors had begun singing the war song and were making preparations for a campaign against the Sioux and Sauteux.

La Vérendrye gave the messengers a necklace and some tobacco, and told them that in fifteen days he would start himself for Fort St. Pierre urging them to do nothing till he arrived. He hoped that the weather would cool their warlike ardor.

On December 30th, 60 Assiniboinés and 10 Crees from Lake Winnipeg arrived at his fort, headed by four chiefs of the former and two of the latter. This deputation's arrival was quite an event, being the first that came to him from that lake which he intended to visit soon. The purpose of these Indians was to seek the friendship of the French and to form an alliance with them. At this point of our narrative, La Vérendrye gives us a weighty piece of information which deserves to be noted. He says that there were, at his fort, 20 men, and they gave the Indians a welcome by means of firing a salute. The whole number of men under La Vérendrye was 42, divided as follows: 12 at Fort St. Pierre, 20 at Fort St. Charles, and 20 wintering on the east shore of the Lake of the Woods (Grassey River.)

La Vérendrye realized exactly how important this visit of the Assiniboinés and Crees of Lake Winnipeg might prove. He therefore did his utmost to give them a notable welcome. On December 31st, 1733, and January 1st, 1734, he and they sat in a grand council. The chiefs told him that their nation was composed of seven villages, of which some had as many as 900 inhabitants. They desired to be numbered among the children of the father of the French, the King of France.

The only present they brought was a bundle of beaver skins, and about 100 pounds of ox fat. For a man of his limited means, La Vérendrye was quite prodigal. He distributed among them 30 pounds of powder, 40 pounds of shot, 200 flints, 30 packages of tobacco, 20 axes, 60 knives and some maize and other articles. He assured them that he was pleased to enroll them as children of the father of the French, and that if they followed his instructions he

would send them, every year, a party of Frenchmen who would bring them things that they needed; but, in return, he hoped they *would show their appreciation*, that is, that they would bring their furs to trade with his men. Then he adds this typical expression which shows that the Indians of that day were just as they are to-day. "I gave them maize and fish for a banquet, for without a pot feat no friendship would hold with them."

On the 2nd of January he called together in his house all the Frenchmen, the six chiefs and prominent men of the two Indian nations. The meeting opened as usual with the distribution of presents to every one; he then told them that he had with him a blacksmith who could manufacture axes, guns, knives, pots and other utensils of the sort, but that he was short of material and it was a very long distance from Montreal and difficult to bring them from there. He asked them whether they knew of any iron mine that could be worked. An interpreter from the Assiniboines, who spoke the Cree dialect, answered that he had seen in the west several iron mines with different shades of metal, and that one of them was five days' journey from the fort, on a height, that this mine was pure and the iron from it gave a better metallic sound than the fire shovel which he saw in the commander's room; he added that the iron was very hard to break, that on the outside it was black, but inside it was white. Further, he said that there was another mine, farther away in which the ore was larger, and the Indians made bracelets out of it. Finally, he declared that there was a third mine close to a river that flowed toward the setting sun. In that region the soil was yellow, the iron hard, in round lumps or shining leaves. A creek drained this mine and deposited a yellow sand of the color of the soil.

The interpreter also assured the Frenchmen that on the banks of that river, at the foot of a hill about 400 or 500 feet square, a column of smoke is seen continually blowing out. Sometimes flames are seen issuing from the crater, and that in some other places on the prairie the ground was covered with pieces of black iron, generally round and of different sizes, and of very heavy stones which they used to light fires.

La Vérendrye would have liked very much to get samples of these various metals; but the Indians told him that they could not

go that way, as they had promised to go trading next spring with the Achipoüanes or Caserniers. By this they evidently meant the Mandans.

When he heard that nation mentioned, La Vérendrye endeavored to get all the information he could because of the early expedition he planned to those unknown parts.

"The Assiniboines," La Vérendrye says, "told me the forts and houses of the Achipoüanes were very much like our own, except the roofs which are flat and covered with earth and stones. Their forts are surrounded with two strong rows of stakes and there are two towers at opposite corners. Their houses are large and propped against the palissade, so that you can go all around the fort by walking on the top of the houses. In these houses there are cellars where they keep their maize in large wicker baskets. They never leave their forts. Everybody works on the land, men and women except the chiefs, who are waited on by the others. The Indians are very tall with well-proportioned limbs, the complexion being white and they walk with their toes out-turned. Their hair is fair, broyn or red and some have black. They have bearded faces, though some shave, others pull out the hair, the rest letting it grow. They are condescending and affable to visitors, but they are constantly on their guard. They do not visit the tribes of their neighborhood. Their clothing is made of tanned leather or dressed skins, skilfully treated and in different colors. They wear a kind of jacket, trousers and stockings of the same materials. It looks as though their shoes were of a piece with their stockings. The women wear a long dress. It is a sort of tunic that reaches to the ankle. They also wear a belt that supports an apron. These garments are all of leather cleverly worked. They plait their hair and coil it up on their heads.

"This is a very industrious people. They sow wheat, beans, peas, oats and several other grains in large quantities. They trade with the Indians about who call upon them. The women do not work as hard as the squaws of our Indians; but they attend to the house which they keep very clean, and they help with the farm work. The Achipoüanes breed several kinds of domestic animals, such as horses and goats. They rear several kinds of poultry, the common hen, turkeys, geese, ducks and others whose names are

not known to our Indians. They live ordinarily on maize as do our voyageurs, but they also eat considerable meat, beef, moose, stag, etc., which they catch by means of deep holes covered with sticks and leaves, the covers being so laid as to tip over when tripped upon. They hunt on horse back and go in large parties.

"Their smallest forts are usually square and measure from five to six acres on each front. They are surrounded by a deep ditch and have two gates. There is a large square within the fort on which all the houses open. As all their forts are close to a river, they have subterranean passages from the centre of the square to the water front, so that they can reach it unseen and even prepare an ambuscade. Their weapons of offense and defense are the bow and arrow, shield, axe, and a dart like a lance.

"The chief's house is more roomy than the others, and higher. It is situated opposite the gate. In one wing his slaves and servants are housed. In the centre is a hall reserved for public assemblages and receptions. The other wing is occupied by the apartments of his wives, and a separate door leads to each division. In front of the chief's residence is a long pole surmounted by a weathercock. On the outside of the house, at each end, are bull's heads, ornamented with decorations that are apparently the arms of the tribe. This nation has only one great chief, but many forts are located on the banks of a large river which flows toward the setting sun. The Assiniboines saw nine of these forts separated from one another by about a league or less, but they had been told that there were several more, above and below that occupied by the big chief. Every fort has a chief but he is subordinate to the great chief of the nation, and when there is any alarm they signal to each other by means of a trumpet so that within a few hours the whole nation is on the lookout. It seems they have other ways of signalling also.

"Their canoes are small, made of skin and rounded at the ends. They hold only one man each and he propels it by means of a double bladed paddle or small oars. This river which is 18 to 20 acres wide, is very deep and extremely well stocked with fish. The current is swift but there are, so far as the natives know, no rapids. It waters a large territory without a mountain, part of which is prairie land and part tall timber. Oak and other trees

like those of Canada grow there, the same insects also are found, but a kind of snake, about two feet long, and rather black than gray is found there, that has two horns on its head, is harmless unless attacked or stepped upon, and that tribe knows of an herb which will cure the bite of this snake which is feared only by strangers."

The interpreter went on to say to La Vérendrye that the Achipoüanes made use of iron knives with artistically carved horn handles. They also used earthen or stone jars bearing designs of flowers, and varnished on the inside. They also had vessels made of wicker. These Indians had heard that the French were on their way westward and expected soon to see them. They had entrusted the Assiniboines with a message to the chief of the French saying that they anxiously awaited him as they wanted to make friends with him, and that they wanted to be advised beforehand of his coming so as to accord him a fitting welcome.

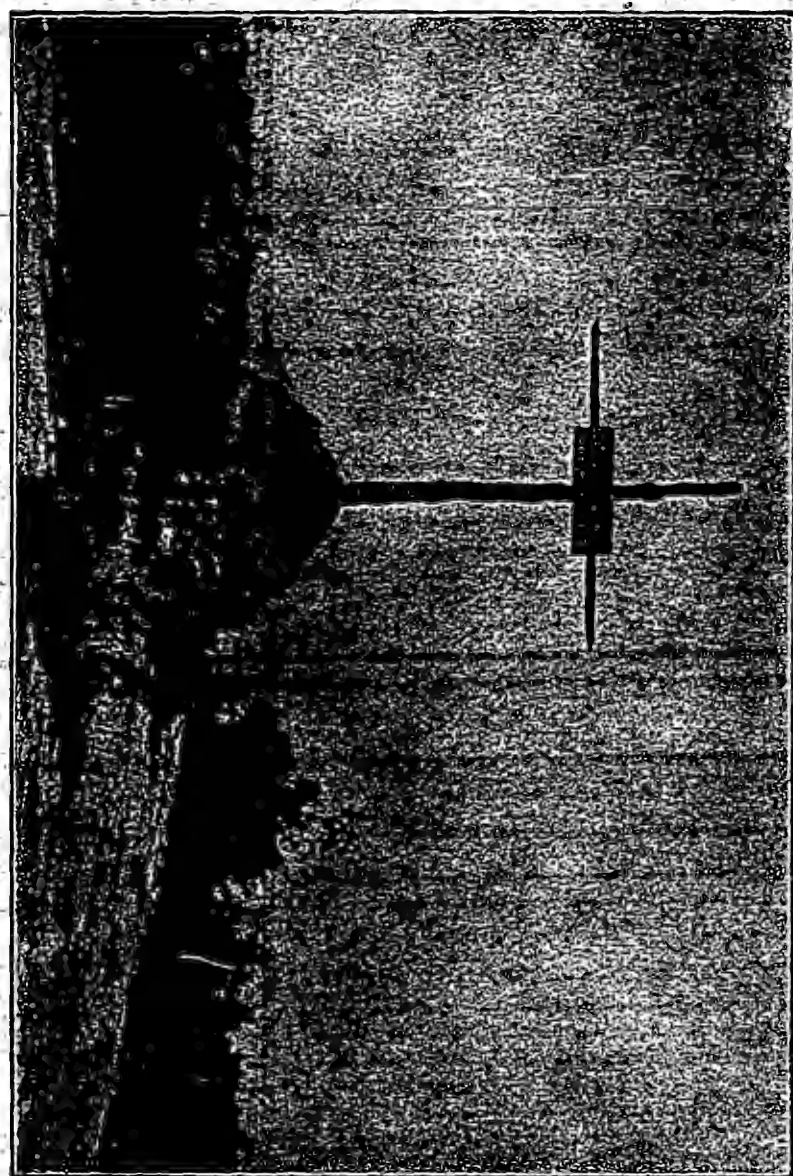
The Assiniboines remained at the fort for seven days enjoying the hospitality of the French and giving the commander instructions as to his route westward. He distributed flags and necklaces among them that they might display when they got home, as souvenirs of the honorable way in which they had been entertained by the French.

La Vérendrye offered to take two of their chiefs to Montreal with him to give them a better notion of the power of the French and the love the French bore the natives.

They agreed to visit him again next year accompanied by two Cree chiefs; but they desired, as a matter of reciprocity, that he should allow his son, who spoke the Cree dialect, to head the party. La Vérendrye acceded to their request and on January 5th, 1734, they left the fort, highly pleased with the way they had been entertained.

We are not told by La Vérendrye which of his sons spoke Cree. Probably it was his eldest son, as it is known that he spoke the Monsonis dialect very fluently, as is evidenced by several passages in the journal of the Explorer.

Very important consequences sprang from this visit of a party of Assiniboines to Fort St. Charles. It influenced the Indians of Lake Winnipeg and of the prairies that stretch down to the





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Missouri, to welcome the French chief when he should come, and disposed them to assist the progress of his expedition. During the winter of 1733-34 a certain number of Crees wintered close to Fort St. Charles. Among them was "La Martre Blanche," a centenarian but enjoying great vigor, with his five wives and numerous progeny. He showed a warm attachment to the Discoverer, and was instrumental in maintaining the goodwill of the natives toward the French.

On January 12th, three Frenchmen and four Monsonis reached Fort St. Charles from Fort St. Pierre. They bore a letter from Urtubise urging the Discoverer to hasten thither to pacify 400 Monsonis who were making diligent preparations for an attack upon the Sioux. He said the old squaws were bemoaning night and day the death of their relatives, imploring their warriors to avenge them. The Discoverer determined to make an effort to calm their warlike ardor. He left on the 16th of January with his son Jean-Baptiste, five of his men, a Cree chief, a Monsonis chief and 14 natives. When seven days out they came to the first huts of the Monsonis, in which a band of warriors had already assembled. These assented to the proposition to accompany La Vérendrye to Fort St. Pierre which was two days' journey from there. On January 29th he held a council in the house of Urtubise, at which the Monsonis were present.

Indeed it was no easy task to induce these barbarians to lay down their arms, as they were excited by hatred and breathing only vengeance. He was obliged to summon all the resources of his fertile brain and even to bluff in order to pacify them. The only promise he got from them then was that nothing would be done till spring. The chief of these warriors would not consent to return home except that he be allowed in the spring to carry the war into the territory of the "Mascoutins Pouannes," (Prairie Sioux), and that the eldest son of La Vérendrye should go with them to witness their prowess.

The Discoverer remained at Fort St. Pierre for seven days to rest from the fatigue of his journey. Such a journey, made in the heart of the winter, at a time when the thermometer reaches 50 below zero, through an unsheltered stretch of frozen lake, exposed to the full sweep of the northern gale, demanded a great deal of

courage and great endurance. The hardships of that trip caused the wounds sustained by La Vérendrye at Malplaquet to reopen. It had been with the greatest difficulty that he had been able to reach Fort St. Pierre. On the 5th of February he left the fort and after nine days travel, again entered his chief fort. On February 15th four Crees acting as messengers of a Cree chief of Lake Winnipeg called upon La Vérendrye at Fort St. Charles.

They gave him as presents, one slave, and a necklace and begged of him to favor them by sending Frenchmen to settle on their lands on the shore of Lake Winnipeg. After making them presents, as is customary, he acceded to their request on condition that they would provide guides to show the French the way to their country.

They left the next day quite pleased with their answer. They were not long before they came back ; for as early as March 7th two guides, despatched by their chief, appeared at the fort carrying dried moose meat, and begged of him to keep his promise.

On March 9th two Frenchmen who volunteered, left with the guides, after being minutely instructed as regards the way they were to treat the natives and the place that would be most suitable to build a fort. It was therefore in the spring of 1734 that the French for the first time went to Lake Winnipeg and ascended the Red River as will appear later on. From La Vérendrye's journal it is patent that the Indians kept slaves, whom they either sold or admitted into their families. The Discoverer bought some, yielding to the entreaties of the chief and probably used them as servants. Such a change of masters was certainly for their good. From mere prisoners they stepped up to the office of servants.

The short visit of La Vérendrye to Fort St. Pierre had been sufficient to postpone hostilities, but not entirely to stifle them. On May 7th seven Frenchmen repaired to Fort St. Charles in company with 400 Monsonis, who, that very evening, began singing their war song. The signal had been given and restraint removed. Henceforth no power on earth could check that band of savages, having shaken off their winter torpor, not to be appeased except by Sioux scalps.

The chief then spoke to La Vérendrye as follows : "Here we are come to you. Whom shall we strike ?" Then without wait-

ing for an answer, he went on: "I am a chief, it is true, but I am not always master of the will of my warriors. If you allow your son to come with us we will go straight to the place you told us to go. If you refuse, I will not be responsible for the blow that will be struck. There are several chiefs among us who are ill disposed toward the Sioux and Sautaux. You know that some of them invaded our territory as late as the first snows, and if they slaughtered none of us it is because we discovered them in time. Think well what you propose to do."

It was a regular challenge. The speech was to the point and founded on indisputable facts. The Crees and Monsonis who were constantly harassed by their foes who came by the St. Pierre river endeavoring to scalp them, had a right to protect themselves; and to achieve this end, it was necessary to crush the sanguinary daring of the Sioux and Sautaux. They could not allow their families to be butchered.

Moreover, La Vérendrye had been informed. They did not come to him asking what they could do. War had been declared and they offered the Discoverer the command of this party by giving them his eldest son as its chief, promising him obedience. La Vérendrye, as he himself admits, was placed in a very awkward position, with prospects antagonistic to his purpose and fraught with danger for his son. He had temporized as long as he could, but now his control had been broken. In his journal he makes us his confidant, showing the tumult that stirred his soul. "How can I, he say", place my eldest son in the hands of barbarians whom I do not know, to go and wage war against other barbarians whose names and power I do not know.

"Who knows whether my son will ever return, or that he will not be made prisoner by the Mascoutins Potiannes the sworn enemies of the Crees and Monsonis, who want me to let him go. On the other hand, if I refuse to let him go, I have reason to fear that they will charge me with cowardice and that they will come to the conclusion that the French are cowards."

In this difficulty he resolved to take the advice of the French of the Fort. Their unanimous opinion was that he should grant the desire of the Indians. His eldest son desired ardently to follow them and several Frenchmen wanted to go with him. The Dis-

coverer would not agree that anyone except his son should accompany the war party. He did not want either that he should head them. He decided that he should follow them in the office of their adviser and to be the eye-witness of their bravery. He gave him written instructions directing him how he should behave in the council and he repeated his advice in presence of all the Indians.

On May 9th, all the Cree and Monsonis warriors, numbering 660, assembled within the square of the fort, where the commander had caused seats to be placed for the 14 chiefs who were as so many captains of companies. He gave them 50 pounds of powder, 100 pounds of bullets, 400 flints and other merchandise and had his son sitting by his side. He spoke to his son in French and he translated to the Monsonis while an interpreter repeated it in the Cree tongue. He spoke of peace. He told them he could not understand why, after having defeated the Sioux, they still sought further revenge. At the request of the shareholders in the enterprise who were in the fort, he announced that he would go to Montreal and bring guns and cauldrons but that he would exchange them only for marten and lynx furs. The purpose of this announcement was to induce the Indians to hunt these animals, something they had not heretofore done. He entrusted his son to their care as his dearest possession, and told them not to do anything without consulting him. "He is not used to hardships like you," he said, "but he is as strong."

After this speech, a little dispute arose. Both Crees and Monsonis wanted the honor of the company of Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye in their canoes, offering to give him a warrior to wait upon him. He chose the Crees but consoled the Monsonis by telling them that they would all march together and live under the same huts.

The commander presented each chief with a tomahawk, intoned the war song, asked them to do their duty, explained to them how soldiers fought in France, and showed them the wounds he had received at Malplaquet. It set them all wondering. Lastly, he dealt at length on trading. "The French," he said, "buy from you your meat, wild oats, barks, resin, and several other things which formerly were no good to you. Why don't you hunt oftener,

so as to prepare furs, that the traders be not compelled to leave with empty canoes? They take your furs after you have been using them, while before our coming they were a loss to you." He warned them not to kill any beaver in the summer time because the traders would not buy such skins. "You begged me to advance you goods in autumn, he said," so that you could hunt during the winter. Your chiefs have answered for those credits. With great difficulty I have been able to advance you the most necessary things in the autumn. See therefore that these goods are paid for as they are not mine but are charged to me if you do not pay. If I let you have what you want, it is not with the intention that you should go and take your furs to the English. They do not trust you, and do not allow you inside their forts. You are not allowed to choose the kind of goods you want. You are obliged to take what they hand you through the window. They refuse to take certain parts of your furs which are a loss to you. With us you run no risk and you are not obliged to go far. Moreover you are allowed to choose what you want. Every one of you men, women and children, come into our houses and enter our forts when you please and are always welcome. Our goods, as you say yourselves are better than those of the English. I warn you that no credit will be given to those who take their furs to the English."

After making these observations which were called for to render trading more profitable to his partners, he gave them a banquet. All the Indians promised to obey his instructions.

On May 10th La Vérendrye sent six canoes of furs to Kaminstigoya. On the next day the native warriors took leave of the Discoverer and went to place their canoes above the fort at the river by which the enemy was in the habit of coming to attack them, so that their families might be in safety during their absence. Afterward they were to march out on the prairie to the rendez-vous with the Assiniboines.

The Crees and Monsonis told La Vérendrye on leaving that the campaign would last two moons, and that when the Assiniboines joined them their total strength would be 1100 or 1200 warriors.

We note in a report of the Marquis de Beauharnois, dated

October 14th 1736, that the eldest son of La Vérendrye accompanied the Indians on an expedition against the Maskoutinpoïanes, (Prairie Sioux), but that he retraced his steps and the warriors proceeded without him. (1) We may perhaps conclude from this that the son of La Vérendrye finding that he could not agree with the Indian chiefs, and seeing how useless it was to try to advise them, made up his mind to go back to Fort St. Charles.

We are led to believe that the Indians going out to fight the Sioux took the route of Rivière aux Roseaux. The river is separated from the Lake of the Woods by a short portage only. Going that way they would strike the Red River about opposite the parish of Letellier where the Assiniboines were waiting for them. From there they would proceed up the Red River and fall upon the Sioux in Minnesota. We find on a map dated 1740, the territory of the Poïanes indicated. It was a little west of Point du Bois, pretty close to Red Lake. (2)

After the bloody drama of Massacre Island, two Monsonis, on August 18th 1736, found two canoes belonging to the unfortunate expedition of Father Aulneau, in the southern part of the Lake of the Woods. (3) The Prairie Sioux had abandoned them in their hasty retreat toward the prairies.

However, Rivière aux Roseaux is found at the southern extremity almost, of the lake, and this detail confirms us in the opinion that it was the usual route followed by Lake of the Woods Indians to reach the upper part of the Red River. Moreover, the traditions among the Indians supports the contention just made. The Indians gave that route the name of "Chemin de la Guerre", (Warroad), by which it is still known. To get to Rivière aux Roseaux from the Lake of the Woods, canoes went up the Warroad River, (chemin de la guerre), and after a portage of about 10 miles, reached Hay River, which is only a branch of Rivière aux Roseaux. The Warroad River flows into the Lake of the Woods through Muskeg Bay.

In La Vérendrye's journal, under date of December 8th,

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, p. 57.

(2) *Idem* p. 42. Bois Fort is likely called now "Bois du Sioux River" near Breckenridge.

(3) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, p. 48.

1736, it is related how he had sent a few men by the Savanne portage to Fort Maurepas, and across country to the Red River. (1)

It is assured from what has gone before, that La Vérendrye's consent to the warlike expedition of the Crees and Monsonis against the Sioux was given under compulsion rather than willingly. He submitted to the inevitable and managed to locate the battle field as far as possible from the route of his proposed journey in search of new lands.

Moreover, if we wish to find precedents for La Vérendrye's conduct we need only look at that of the celebrated Champlain, who was compelled to side with the Hurons and Algonquins against the Iroquois; and that fact did not prevent historians from counting him among our national heroes and erecting a monument to his memory.

The western Sioux, like the eastern Iroquois, were shameless rogues who respected neither oath nor most solemnly formed treaty. The only way to stop their depredations was to impress them with fear. To obtain from them a lasting peace there was no other way for the Monsonis and Crees but to show that they were their masters. Our Métis very quickly grasped the wisdom of this simple policy. They gave the Sioux a couple of good lessons, and when they understood the kind of men they had to deal with they skulked away and never gave any more trouble.

Finally, the conduct of La Vérendrye received the approval of the French court. In a despatch from the minister to the Marquis of Beauharnois, dated, Versailles, April 12th, 1735, we find the following words: "His Majesty has especially appreciated the zeal of which he gave proof when, at the demand of the Crees and Monsonis he allowed his son to go on the warpath with them. It is most likely that such a proof of confidence will endear him to those Indians." (2)

Another matter deserves to be noted here, and that is that in La Vérendrye's time the country south from the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake was occupied by the Ojibways. These Indians belonged to the Alaine race like the Crees and Sautaux.

(1) *Bulletin R. H.*, vol 1, p. 53.

(2) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, p. 24.

The name by which they were known was "Sugwaundugahvinine-wug," which signifies, "the men that live in the heavy timbered forests." In old maps their country is designated by the name "Bois Forts", or big woods." But we must not confound this country with the "Pointe du Bois Fort" in the upper part of the Red River. (1)

On May 11th, 1734, the two men who had been sent by La Vérendrye Lake Winnipeg as scouts, returned to Fort St. Charles, with a chief and 18 natives. As these natives knew that they could get no guns or pots at the French settlement, they had decided to go to Fort York for a last time, hoping that in the following year to trade with the French nearer home.

The two Frenchmen reported that the most convenient spot to build a fort, on account of the facility of securing provisions and also because of its proximity to all the Indian tribes was *two days journey down the lake to the southwest, and at the mouth of the Red River*, that in that place white oak was plentiful as well as tall timber. They had been told that between 5 and 6 leagues from the Red River there was a salt spring which emptied into a bowl shaped lake where the water evaporated with the heat of the sun, leaving a very white salt. They brought a small sample of the salt with them which the Discoverer found to be very good. The Cree chief presented a slave to La Vérendrye as a gift and told him that the Assiniboinés on the southwest of Lake Winnipeg had been told that the French intended to settle close to this lake. He also reported having so informed the governor at Fort York who had replied that he was not sorry to see the French penetrating farther into the country as there was no obstacle to their getting along together for they were brethren. The French, added the governor, wish fat beaver, and the English want them lean. "If you see them, (the French), tell them, for me, to speak no ill of the English as we will speak no ill of the French." La Vérendrye replied with the same friendly feelings. The Cree chief reported also that it took the Indians 10 days to go from Lake Winnipeg to the Bay and 20 days to return.

(1) Aborig. of Minnesota, 1911, pp. 647, 674, 681, 693 and 705.

La Vérendrye made the Indian chief some presents and promised him that in about two moons he would go and settle on the Red River among his people.

On May 27th, his son Pierre coming from Michillimakinac, landed at Fort St. Charles. His father, who had been impatiently waiting for him, because he was short of merchandise and could not do any trading, left for Montreal on the same day, taking due precautions for the security of the fort. (Margry, p. 588.)

He left his second son, (Pierre), in command, in the absence of the eldest, Jean-Baptiste, with ten men. Jean-Baptiste who had gone with the war party on May 11th, had not yet returned on May 27th. We can only conjecture that he reached the Red River by the route of Rivière aux Roseaux, before deciding to give the Crees and Monsons the slip.

The Discoverer left with five canoes and reached Kaministigoya on June 16th. On the 18th of June he sent three canoes with twelve men under Cartier, one of his partners in trade, with orders to make for Lake Winnipeg without delay, and from there *to the mouth of the Red River*. He was to build a small fort about an acre square on a plan which he furnished. He commissioned him to tell the Indians that his son would arrive there with two canoes at the end of August moon. This fort was built on the west bank of the Red River about six miles farther down the town of Selkirk. It is probable Cartier started to build this fort in the latter part of July or early in August, 1734. To please the Indians, who complained that it was too far from the lake, this fort was abandoned and Fort Maurepas was built in the autumn of the same year.

On June 19th, La Vérendrye left Kaministigoya and landed on July 6th at Michillimakinac. La Jemmeraye, his nephew, who had spent the winter of 1733-34 in Canada, arrived at Michillimakinac on the same day, a few hours after him, and brought with him the orders of the Marquis de Beauharnois. La Jemmeraye left this post on July 12th, with six canoes, for the Lake of the Woods. He was to replace his cousin at Fort St. Charles and the latter was to proceed to the banks of the Red River where he was to find the fort either finished or progressing rapidly.

Having given these instructions to his nephew, La Vérendrye

left Michillimakinac and reached Montreal on August 16th, 1734, in splendid health and without any reasons "to worry about the four posts for which he had made adequate provisions," to use his own language. The four posts in question were :

1. Fort St. Pierre, built by La Jemmeraye in 1731.
2. Fort St. Charles, erected by the Discoverer in 1732.
3. The small Roseaux fort built during the summer of 1734 by Cartier.
4. Fort Maurepas built during the autumn of 1734 by the eldest son of the Discoverer.

We are already acquainted with the description of Forts St. Pierre and St. Charles. The fort à la Fourche aux Roseaux was to be a plain palisade enclosing a square log house used as residence and a shed for the goods and furs. At about two miles before emptying into Lake Winnipeg, the Red River is divided into three branches flowing into the lake within a front of three miles. The banks are marshy and covered with reeds. Lake Netley, to the west above the forking of the river, very nearly joins it, being separated only by a narrow strip of land covered with tall grasses which are submerged in the spring. This fact accounts for the name of the fort, "Fourche aux Roseaux."

In a note by Margry we read : "In olden times a fort was built on the Red River by the eldest La Vérendrye, about five leagues from the lake. It has been abandoned as well as the one built at the junction of the river of Assiniboels, on account of being so near Fort La Reine and Fort Maurepas. (p. 617.)"

It is to be noted that at the branching of the mouths of the Red River, for a distance of about 15 miles, the banks are low. Then they suddenly rise high and steep, and it was on that tableland, if tradition is to be relied upon, on the west bank, that this little fort of which not a vestige remains, was built. When making use of the name, Red River, we aim to conform to the term adopted by the first explorers who paddled on its waters, and which has continued to be used ever since. According to the Indians, the Red River was a tributary of the Assiniboine, and flowed into the Assiniboine at a point opposite St. Boniface. There must be some confusion here. Fort aux Roseaux was built by Cartier and Fort Maurepas by Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye. But the mistake can

easily be explained. Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye reached the mouth of the Red River so shortly after Cartier that he (La Vérendrye) may have finished this fort and have been credited, to a certain extent, with its construction.

Fort Maurepas was built on the north shore of the Winnipeg River at its entrance into the lake of the same name. It was placed a little lower down than Fort Alexander, at the mouth of a little creek. (1).

We must beg permission here to interrupt our narrative because we have reached the end of the first stage of the voyage of our Discoverer.

Some have inquired whether La Vérendrye was justified in advising the Indians not to return to the English posts at Hudson Bay, since they might be debtors of that Company. By consulting the documents left by the Discoverer, every speck of doubt is removed, and this accusation falls through. We are indeed informed by him that at that time the English did not open any credits with the Indians. This point is so well established that in a speech made by La Vérendrye to a party of 600 Indians, he does not mince the fact that the English never gave them any credit, while at Fort St. Charles the French sold goods to them in the autumn, to be paid for in the ensuing spring. Moreover, La Vérendrye would buy all their furs, even such as had been used by them during the winter, in their huts and, on the other hand the English rejected a large part of the skins which they brought them.

It is pleasant to be able to acknowledge that the intercourse existing between the Discoverer and the English of Hudson Bay was ever courteous and kindly. Everyone strove zealously for his fatherland, not forgetting to respect his neighbor's rights.

La Vérendrye tells us plainly what was the purpose of his journey to Montreal in 1734. First of all, he went to make report of his achievements.

He had been directed to build a fort at Rainy Lake, another at the Lake of the Woods and a third at Lake Winnipeg. He had fulfilled his mission and built besides these a small fort that might be needed in emergency on the Red River, and was an opening through which the French could reach the Red River Valley.

(1) *Heroes of New France*, p. 67.

On the other hand the financial position of the Discoverer had shown a loss. Even if trade had been carried on more extensively, which it could not, the profits would not have met the expenses of constructing the forts, garrisoning them, and giving presents to the Indians to secure their goodwill. When dealing with the Indians constant open-handedness was the only policy. La Vérendrye told the governor, de Beauharnois, what his circumstances were. On October 10th, 1733, this governor, whose persevering efforts on behalf of La Vérendrye never ceased, and Hocquart, who shares with Talon the honor of having been the best superintendent that New France ever had, wrote the minister requesting him to support the finances of this enterprise.

La Vérendrye and his partners have lost, the Governor said, more than 43,000 livres, and they must yet pay the wages of several employees. The voyageurs refused to go any farther unless they were paid what was owing to them. The same applied to the merchants who provided merchandise for trade, who would furnish no more goods till they received payment for what they had already advanced. The total was 600 livres, profit from the three posts, and it required but 30,000 livres to carry on the enterprise for three years.

In a letter of October 8, 1734, forwarded to the French court by Marquis de Beauharnois, which was handed to the minister on January 3rd, 1735, the governor made a report of the discoveries and projects of La Vérendrye and asked for the support of the King for this brave officer. In closing the letter he added: "I venture to assure you that the zeal he displays in this enterprise can have no other motive than the good of the colony which at the present time is very expensive for him." (1)

The minister replied that it was not right that the King should share in the expense proposed but that the members of the expedition should be able to keep it going out of the profits they made on furs. (2)

It was to provide against such an embarrassing situation that La Vérendrye had sent La Jemmeraye to Québec in 1733.

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, p. 55.

(2) *Heroes of New France*, p. 69.

The court of France did not want to hear or understand anything about the great expedition. La Vérendrye was left to his own resources entirely. He succeeded in his worthy mission but ruined himself in the process and acquired no profits for himself or for his children.

Though continually harassed by the tradesmen who were greedy for big returns, and prevented from making progress westward by the pressing need of amassing quantities of furs to satisfy his creditors, he never lost sight of his objective and achieved his great discoveries,

At the price of great personal hardships and by dint of repeated solicitations he procured what he required in the nature of indispensable goods. His strong will surmounted all obstacles. His partners refused to bear the expense of presents to the natives and he furnished them himself. He was obliged to rent the forts to his creditors for three years and give them the right to manage the posts through agents, so that he could spend all his energies, untrammelled with commercial interests, in exploring the west. (1) In the spring of 1735 La Vérendrye himself wrote: "I had, before leaving, (June 6, 1735), ceded to my tradesmen the privilege of trading and the business of the posts I had established, the previously interested parties having finished their term. (Margry, p. 588.)

In the meanwhile, La Vérendrye had sent his youngest son, Louis Joseph, 18 years of age, to Quebec to learn mathematics and drawing, in the winter of 1734-35, so that he might be able to draw correct maps of the country they were going to explore. He decided to take him west with him in the spring so that he would have by his side his four sons as partners in his enterprise. (1)

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. p. 56.

THE RETURN TO FORT ST. CHARLES WITH FATHER AULNEAU, S.J.,
1735. DEATH OF LA JEMMERAYE, MAY 10TH 1735, AT THE
"FOURCHE AUX ROSEAUX. MISSION OF FATHER AULNEAU.
DEATH OF FATHER AULNEAU AND OF JEAN-BAPTISTE DE LA
VÉRENDRYE, ELDEST SON OF THE EXPLORER AT MASSACHE
ISLAND IN JUNE 1736. CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DISASTER.
NOTES ON FATHER AULNEAU. PREPARE FOR HIS GREAT EX-
PEDITION OF 1738.

On June 5th, 1735, La Vérendrye once more took his departure from Montreal to continue his explorations in the west. He brought along Louis Joseph, his youngest son. On September 6th, he was at Fort St. Charles with Father Aulneau, S.J., who was the successor of Father Mesaiger. He found the fort starving and no prospect of a wild oat harvest as the lake had risen. Immediately on his arrival, he sent his nephew to Fort Maurepas which had been built during the preceding autumn by his eldest son. He provisioned this fort with the goods he had brought with him for the purpose of continuing his exploration. His intention was to go and meet his nephew as soon as the canoes came in.

On February 27th, 1736, he sent to Fort Maurepas two of his sons and two soldiers to guard it. He himself spent the winter at Fort St. Charles getting ready to march across the prairies in the coming spring. The canoes which were to accompany him to Fort St. Charles had been lost at Grand Portage, (Pigeon River), through wrong handling on the part of the guide. This accident obliged him to give up, for the subsistence of his party during the winter, all that he had left. (1)

La Vérendrye's plans for exploring the west were doomed to delay by two sad trials. La Jemmeraye took sick during the winter, as a result of the trials and hardships he had endured in his reconnoitring of the country. During the month of January 1736, while at Fort Maurepas, he suffered great pain. In the spring he went to the mouth of the Red River and breathed his last on May 10th 1736 at the "Fourche aux Roseaux." His two cousins buried him at that place and erected a cross over his grave.

(1) Margry, pp. 888, and 889.

It is at this point, probably close to the old Hudson Bay post, that the remains of this intrepid Lieutenant de La Vérendrye still lie. This distinguished man was the brother of Madame d'Youville, who founded the order of Sisters of Charity, and a son of Marie Reine de Varenne, sister of the explorer. The governor in recognition of his services had given him a commission as second lieutenant of a company of infantry. As soon as the ice broke on the Winnipeg River, the two sons of La Vérendrye brought the sad news to their father. They were accompanied by the two Frenchmen. They reached Fort St. Charles on June 2nd, 1736, at the very time that Father Aulneau intended to start for Lake Winnipeg. It was his mission to take advantage of the stay of the Assiniboines at the lake for the fishing, catching white fish, to teach them and to follow them, in the fall, to their migration west to the upper Missouri. He was to settle in the first village of the Mandanes he should find. The Mandanes were located close to Fort Barthold. The Superior General of the Jesuits in Canada, realizing the faint success achieved by missions among the wandering tribes like the Crees and Assiniboines, hoped it might be different with a more sedentary tribe. The death of La Jemmeraye, which resulted in the abandonment of Fort Maurepas, had upset the plans of Father Aulneau. As further progress that summer was not to be considered, he decided to return to Michillimakinac at once with the four canoes in order to consult his superiors and receive spiritual consolation from some of his confrères.

On June 2nd, 1736, the two sons of La Vérendrye had arrived with the news of La Jemmeray's death, having left their four canoe loads cached at the Savanne portage so as to make better time to the fort, twenty leagues away. The other three canoes reached the fort the next day. Two men had been left with the cache to guard the goods.

During the winter La Vérendrye had been able to support his garrison with his supply of maize and wild oats gathered at the very gate of the fort. Moreover the natives brought him some moose, cariboo and white fish. All these sources of supply had failed him altogether in the spring. A few steps back from the fort we found an excavation which probably was used by the explorer as cache and ice-house. When the snow melted the water

that flowed down the hill which backed the fort must have filled this hole and made it useless. In June the garrison had as its only provisions some carp in a half decayed condition. Father Aulneau says it had black spots. Northern missionaries who have been in the same plight know how inviting such food was. A man would need to be starving before he would put such food in his mouth. No wonder then if the Indians who witnessed the privations suffered by the French christened the island nearly opposite the fort, "Buckette," (I'm hungry.)

On June 2, La Vérendrye, seeing that no canoes came from Michillimakinac, sent a man named Bourassa, with four comrades to Kaministigoya, in the hope that they would meet the convoy there and tell them to bring relief as soon as possible.

At that time La Vérendrye had a garrison of 50 men and no provisions. Bourassa was a voyageur who related later he had set out on June 3rd and not on the 2nd. (1)

On June 3rd a general council was held to deliberate on the ways and means of procuring food, merchandise and above all, gunpowder.

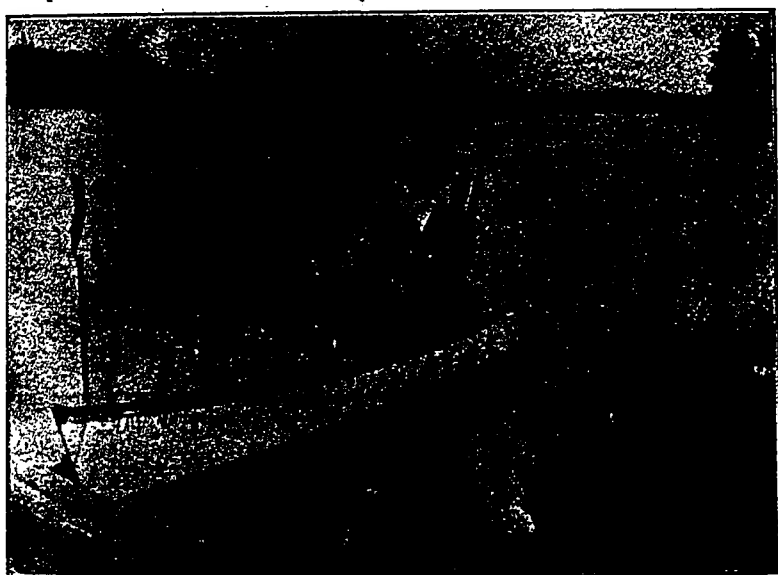
A man must have lived in a savage country to realize the depth of misery and heartrending anguish consequent upon an accident such as that of the autumn of 1735.

The canoes coming from Montreal had stopped for a rest at Grand Portage and La Vérendrye was in want of everything.

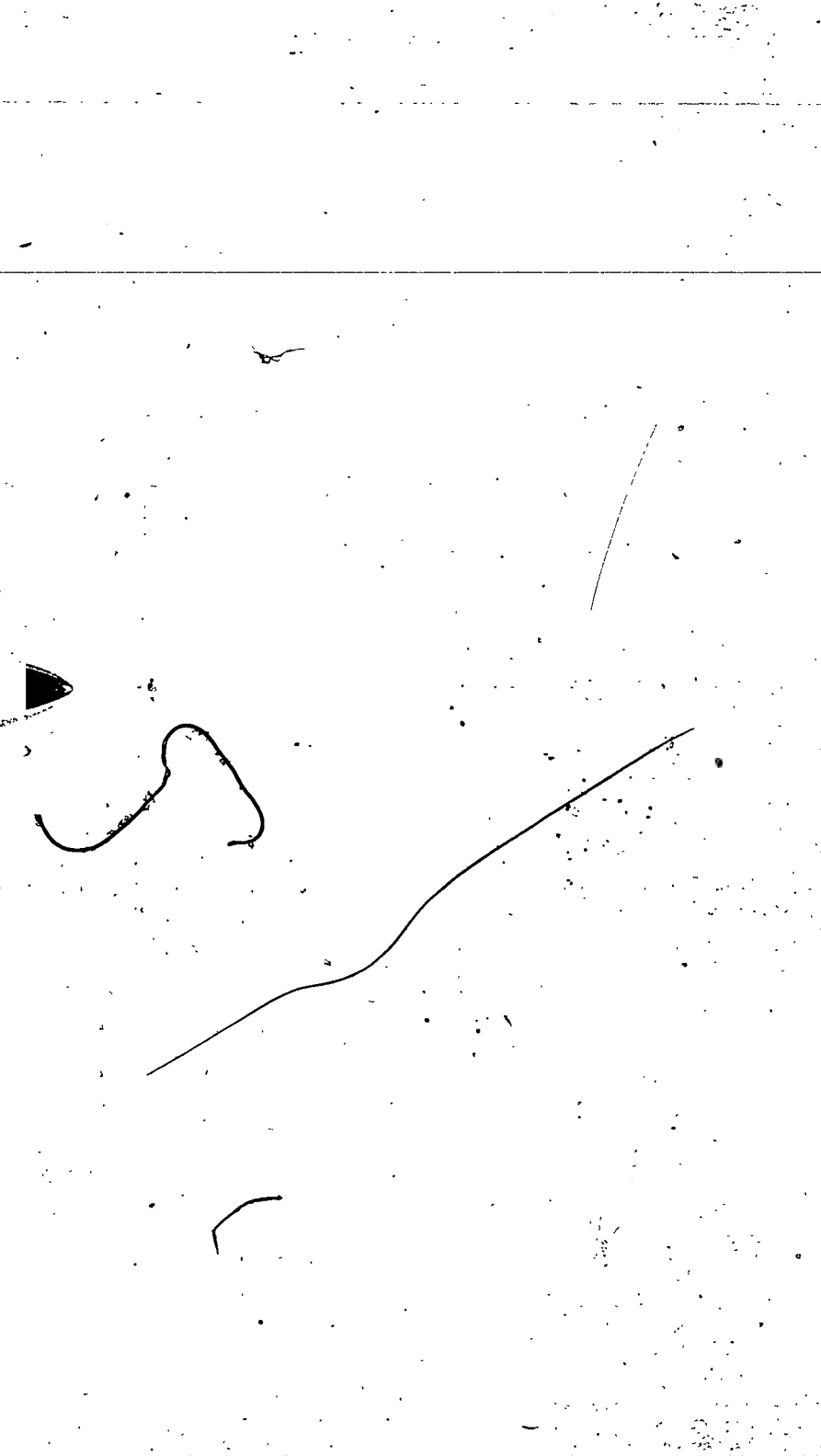
The unanimous opinion of the assembly was to send three canoes with as many men as possible to Kaministigoya whence La Vérendrye expected to get some relief, and then to repair to Michillimakinac and return full speed, to enable the explorer to proceed west before the season was too far advanced.

Father Aulneau asked at once to accompany this convey and that it should be placed under command of Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye. It is probable that the first sergeant was to be intrusted with the flotilla. La Vérendrye wanted to keep his eldest son who had been chosen by the Crees as a chief, and who had moreover exhausted himself by his rapid journey from the Red River to Fort St. Charles. Father Aulneau was responsible for the

(1) Collection Aulneau, p. 93.



THE SEARCH PARTY.



change. He dilated upon the fact that since Jean-Baptiste had become first lieutenant on the death of La Jemmeraye, he would have greater authority over the men than a sergeant, and his presence would enforce better discipline and result in a quicker accomplishment of the voyage. But some canoes of Crees had arrived at the fort, with a warning that Sioux had been seen on the lake, watching a favorable occasion to get scalps. Nothing is more easy to understand than that La Vérendrye, who never spared his own blood, desired to give the post of honor to his son. In that military family it was not usual to keep in the background in times of danger. Since the voyage was to be attended with such great dangers, La Vérendrye thought probably that this was the very reason why he should yield to the entreaties of his missionary.

On June 5th, La Vérendrye inspected the arms and distributed gunpowder and shot to the 20 men comprising the expedition. He strongly urged upon them the necessity of keeping a sharp lookout as there was on the Lake of the Woods a band of Sioux that was after the Crees, and that they might be interfered with. He was answered by all that he need not worry because they all intended to be vigilant.

This expedition numbered 21 men in three canoes. Father Aulneau sailed with six good men whom the explorer had selected with care for his own expedition. Each canoe carried only a half load to ensure greater speed. The 19 men of the escort were surely giants, as the skeletons which we found under the chapel of Fort St. Charles prove. Most probably they left Fort St. Charles only on the afternoon of June 5th, for they landed at Massacre Island to spend the night. Well, this island is only 18 miles from the fort. It is but a rocky hillock measuring about three quarters of a mile in length and only a quarter of a mile in breadth. Its area is only 66½ acres. It is situated two miles and a half from Birch Island, (Ile aux Bouleaux.) The Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal Corporation of St. Boniface bought it on July 20th, 1911. A bare hill, on which stands a wooden cross, surmounts it. A deep ravine full of box wood and brambles, divides it so that there is some difficulty in crossing it from west to east. Probably the slaughter that steeped this land in blood occurred on the western half. The other half is composed of a low stretch land thickly timbered and

was not a likely place for a camp at a season when the mosquitoes rendered such a locality untenable. Not one member of this troop survived to tell the gruesome details of the butchery; and we may rest pretty sure that we will never know how this handful of heroes fell under the onslaught of their foes. Those who visited and examined the theatre of this drama have some plausible right, with certain historical details in their possession to tell how they think it happened.

In the meantime we must relate the events that occurred at Fort St. Charles up to June 26th. They will provide particulars which will throw some light upon this bloody tragedy.

On the day following the departure of the canoes, La Vérendrye, being extremely uneasy about the fate of the two men in charge of the packages of goods at Portage de la Savanne, sent his son Pierre with five men to fetch them and whatever belonged to his nephew. On June 12th he heard from three Monsonis that the Sioux had plundered Bourassa on June 4th in the morning, 12 leagues from Fort St. Charles.

Bourassa had left in Father Aulneau's canoe. He was compelled, most likely by the strong wind prevailing, to land on an island in the Lake of the Woods, for it might be expected that he would be farther away from Fort St. Charles than he was, after being out a whole day, the 2nd to the 4th. But this may be accounted for by the fact that he avers he left only on the 3rd.

On June 14th La Vérendrye received a letter from Fort St. Pierre, bearing date of June 6th, in which Bourassa related that he had been stopped by a band of Sioux warriors about 130 strong. He inquired the reason for their behavior as they were brethren and friends. The Indians told him that it was their custom to recognize no one when on the road, and complained that the French had supplied their foes with weapons to kill them. He replied: "But we supply you too with weapons." Then the Sioux took from him all his goods and tied him to a stake to be burned alive; but thanks to the intercession of a Sioux squaw, they at last consented to spare his life. In reply to interrogations, Bourassa informed the Sioux that there were five or six Cree huts near Fort St. Charles. The Sioux before leaving Bourassa volunteered

the information that they wanted to surprise the Crees who squatted near the fort.

In fact they tried to accomplish this design but were foiled by the sharp lookout maintained at the fort.

From a report by the Marquis de Beauharnois, dated October 14th, 1736, it appears that Bourassa was not alone. It reads as follows: "At the beginning of last June a band of Prairie Sioux numbering about 130 men met Father Aulneau's canoe in charge of a man named Bourassa. They seized all the Frenchmen and tied the leader to a stake to burn him alive. Fortunately a female slave of this nation that he had accepted from the Monsonis spoke to his captors saying, 'My kinsmen, what would you do? I owe my life to this Frenchman. He has never done me any but good turns.' (1) Bourassa says himself that he was accompanied by five men and that they were surprised as they were pushing off from shore in the morning by 30 canoes. After unbinding Bourassa they told him to wait till they came back and they would restore him his property and weapons. Of course, they were no sooner gone than Bourassa made at top speed for Fort St. Pierre."

On June 17th, a Mr. Le Gras who had arrived at Kaminitigoya too late the preceding autumn to go any farther, landed at the fort with two canoes loaded with merchandise.

Le Vérendrye was most uneasy since receiving Bourassa's letter. He therefore inquired at once concerning his son and his missionary. He was convinced that misfortune had overtaken them when Le Gras said he had not met them on the road. On June 19th he sent Le Gras away in a canoe with 8 men and entrusted the command of this expedition to his sergeant.

He ordered this officer to follow the same route that his son and Father Aulneau would have taken.

The next day he sent in the same direction a few Crees who had brought to the fort the produce of their hunt. The violence of the waves raised by the east wind prevented them from going very far.

At last the sergeant returned with his men to the fort on June 22nd and brought him the report of the slaughter of all that had

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society, St. Boniface*, p. 57.

taken part in that expedition, *at a small island seven leagues from the fort where most of the bodies had been found with the heads severed from the trunks in a row close to each other, which makes me think, says La Vérendrye, that they were killed while holding a council and their heads wrapped in beaver robes.* (1)

Governor Beauharnois in a letter to the minister dated October 14th, 1737, gives the same account except that he says "in a circle" instead of "in a row." (2)

I will not quote from posthumous writings or memoirs compiled at great distances from the scene of this sad drama.

It seems to us more justifiable to use evidence originating near the place and to follow closely the text of the Explorer's diary. His assertion from our point of view, has so much weight that we could not set it aside without the gravest reasons.

It is true he was not an eye-witness of what took place on the island when the Sioux struck his people with their murderous hatchets, but he was only four hours away, by canoe. Many proofs which we cannot adduce at this time, must have helped him to form his conclusions and make certain points clear.

In August 1908, the skulls of 19, and the bones of no more than 13 skeletons, were found at Fort St. Charles by the party organized for the very purpose of locating the remains of the victims of that massacre. The skulls of Father Aulneau and Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye are not among the number. It is most likely that they were taken away by the Sioux as war trophies and that the missing bones of their companions were scattered about.

La Vérendrye is of the opinion that they were killed while holding a council. In another place, referring to this massacre, which saddens his heart, he says that it took place "by the greatest of all treasons." (3) Moreover, the Sioux related later on that they had not intended to kill the missionary, but that a young warrior, who wanted to distinguish himself by his bravery, suddenly threw himself on him. The Sioux would seem then to

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, p. 48.

(2) *Rochemonteix*, vol. 1, p. 224.

(3) *Margry*, p. 589.

confirm the opinion of La Vérendrye that a council must have been held to decide upon their fate. (1)

Let us try now by the light of these documents to reconstruct this heartrending tragedy.

On June 5th, these 21 Frenchmen had landed on Massacre Island to rest during the night. It is usual when people are on a journey to retire early so as to be up with the first light of dawn.

The Frenchmen no doubt kept a good watch. It is unreasonable to think that after the severe warnings they had received from their chief, that they would allow themselves to be taken by surprise so soon. The Sioux would have discovered them and noted that they were only a handful of men while they themselves numbered 130 warriors.

The Crees speaking about the Sioux, used to say that they crawled like snakes when they wanted to surprise their enemies; to this may be added that they were as cunning as foxes. Under the present circumstances it is most probable that they would have decided to act as their kindred of the prairies tried to do with the Métis of the Missouri hills: hold parley, speak of peace and at a concerted signal fall upon their enemies unawares.

They therefore must have approached the French with overtures of peace upon their lips. Then by the flickering light of fire that shone on the wild hills that hem in the island, they surrounded them to smoke the pipe of peace and discuss the conditions of an alliance. In his speech the Sioux chief would then have accused the French of selling powder and ball to their enemies and charged young La Vérendrye with the offence of accepting a chiefship among them and leading them to war. With the exception of Father Aulneau it is extremely doubtful if any of the French understood the Sioux dialect. We know from his letters that he was at home in that language and that he spoke Cree very fluently. 2) He therefore would have been most properly selected to answer him. When thus engaged refuting these accusations, a signal might have been given and the Sioux, waiting only the word surrounded the French. The latter placed at the disadvant-

(1) Aulneau Collection, p. 95, 110.

(2) Aulneau Collection, p. 78.

age of too close quarters to move freely and defend themselves successfully, would be overwhelmed at once. It is most probable however, that some were able to kill a few of their foes before they went down.

The Sioux would have carried away their dead and buried the bodies in the sand of the Baie des Marais, where they were found on June 18 by two Monsonis, and two French canoes as well. They also found there 20 Sioux canoes bearing blood stains, and, a short way off, human limbs buried in the sand on the shore. The third canoe was left on Massacre Island. In this manner the great treason of which La Vérendrye spoke may be explained, and we arrive at the conclusion that there is no discrepancy between the report of the Sioux and the opinion held by La Vérendrye, upon the chief features of this gruesome tragedy.

It is only just however, to state that several versions of that event have been given by various writers who are quoted in the Aulneau Collection. (1) Some very interesting details are found therein. Here is a summary of them :

A number of French Canadians saw the bodies of these 21 Frenchmen on Massacre Island a few days after the deed was done. They saw the heads of the Frenchmen placed on beaver skins, most of them scalped. The mission~~ary~~ had one knee on the ground, an arrow stuck in his head, his chest cut open, his left hand on the ground and his *right raised*. Lieutenant La Vérendrye lay on his stomach, his back cut open in many places with knife slashes, and a hoe stuck in his loins. His headless body was garnished with stripes and bands of porcupine.

Father de Gonnor says in a letter that it is most likely they were surprised in their sleep, that every one was beheaded ; but that they were not tortured by the Sioux. From the position in which Father Aulneau's body was found it would seem that he had been beheaded while on his knees. One of the French Canadians who found the bodies took away with him the skull cap of Father Aulneau.

Father F. Martin, S.J., states in his notes that the travellers had landed on an island for breakfast and that a party of maraud-

(1) PP. 88 to 96 and 110.

ing Sioux discovered them by the smoke of their fire. They crept stealthily in and fell upon the French without having been seen. They killed them with tomahawks or pierced them with arrows. Some were able to make their way to the shore but perished in the waters of the lake. Father Aulneau fell upon one knee, wounded with an arrow. Then a Sioux struck him on the head with a tomahawk from behind, and ended his sufferings. The Indians did not dare touch the body of the missionary but carried off his belongings.

A party of Indians from Sault Ste-Marie landing on that island a few days later buried the body under a pile of stones five or six feet high. The bodies could not be buried in the ground because no grave could be dug in the rock.

In 1843, Rev. Father Belcourt, a Pembina missionary, visited this island and saw this tumulus. An Indian told him that his father had assisted in the erection of that tumulus for the missionary.

In another place we read that Father Aulneau was wounded with a knife and beheaded.

Rev. Father Du Jaunay wrote to Madame Aulneau in 1739 that most of the Indians who participated in the massacre did not want to kill the missionary; but that a warrior, thinking to distinguish himself thereby, struck him down.

No sooner had this crime been perpetrated than a clap of thunder struck fear into the hearts of the Sioux and they fled in terror believing that God had thus shown his anger for the crime that had been committed.

The altar stone, chalice and sacerdotal vestments of the priest were carried away by the Indians. The chalice became the property of a widow who had several sons in the party. A short time afterward all, or nearly all her children perished before her eyes. She blamed the chalice given to her by her sons for her misfortunes, and got rid of it by throwing it into the river.

Father Du Jaunay says he procured these particulars from the Indians. Moreover, Father L.-F. Nau, in a letter to Madame Aulneau, October 10th, 1738, relates that during the autumn of 1737 a party of Frenchmen arrested the murderer of Father Aulneau, intending to take him to the settlement and make him un-

dergo, at the hands of the legal authorities the punishment of his crime. Other Indians, his relatives, or perhaps his confederates in the perpetration of the murder, intervened and effected his escape.

From the notes above quoted it is clear enough, that both Father Aulneau and Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye were beheaded. As Father Aulneau was found on his knees with his right hand raised and stiffened in that position by death, we are confirmed in the belief that the missionary in dying absolved his companions who were dying for their fatherland.

This missionary was born in Vendée, at Moutiers sur le Hay, on the 21st of April, 1705. It was there the manor of the Aulneau family, Seigneurs de la Touche, was situated. He belonged to a family that gave several of its members to the church. Two of his brothers were ordained priests and one of his sisters became a nun. He came to Canada on the 12th of August, 1734. In that year La Vérendrye had asked the Superior of the Jesuits to give him a missionary to replace Father Mesaiger. Father Aulneau was chosen. He was ordered therefore to prepare to leave immediately on the opening of navigation for the unknown lands of the extreme west. He was to go first to Fort St. Charles, spend the winter there among the Crees and Assiniboines, learn their language and instruct them as best he could. At that time the French had but a very slight knowledge of these two dialects, which, moreover are very dissimilar. He was instructed to prepare a written list of as many of their words as he could so that, with a dictionary thus compiled, an elementary Cree and Assiniboine grammar might be devised.

Father Aulneau had a great faculty for mastering languages and learning the rules of grammar. In spite of his extreme modesty, he is obliged to admit that he had that faculty in a remarkably high degree. But it was not exactly for the evangelization of those two nations that he was sent. What he was required to do was to benefit those who came after. It was believed that the chances of success for a mission were very slight among such nomad tribes wandering from lake to lake, hunting and fishing.

The Crees and Assiniboines had told La Vérendrye that to the south-west, 900 miles away, there were Indians that lived in

earth huts, and lead a sedentary life. They called them Ouantchipoüanes, that is, "people who live in holes," and declared that white men had never visited them. He was to find his way to this tribe, settle among them and spread his good tidings of the gospel. This tribe was none other than the Mandans. Father Aulneau must have had no ordinary courage to venture thus into unknown lands among savages who were most cruel and always at war. He was quite well aware of the dangers to which he was exposing himself. It needed but the hearing of the sufferings of Father Guignas who eight years previous, had accompanied an expedition into the Sioux country, to know what awaited him. Though the long captivity and tortures of Father Guignas were vividly before his mind, they could not daunt his generous spirit nor quench the fires of his devotion. It must be admitted, however, that in spite of his sublime willingness to devote his life to the salvation of the poor heathen, one thought grieved him deeply as he contemplated his departure namely, the lack of a fellow priest. The idea of absolute isolation, from a spiritual point of view, filled him with consternation. Thus his letters give expression, in moving terms, to his bitter regrets at not having a priestly companion to whom he might pour out his heart. It is thus he writes to another priest, saying that he could joyfully bear any kind of hardship the mission might bring upon him, if he could but have the company of another minister of God, and he closes in asking God to accept the sacrifice of his life and all human consolation as expiation of his sins.

Notwithstanding the pressing request of Father Aulneau, it was not easy to comply with his wishes. Seven or eight missions had been suppressed for lack of priests, and the superior had received year after year new demands for priests.

The only assurance that he could obtain was that the first missionary that came out from France would be sent to join him. As soon as navigation opened he repaired to Montreal to make ready for his departure and confer with La Vérendrye on the subject. On June 21st 1735, he left Sault Saint Louis, (Caughnawaga), to undertake this voyage to distant lands whence he was never to return. On September 6th he reached Fort St. Charles, which, he thought, was only the first stop on his voyage to still

farther western lands, but which, as decided by God, was to be the end of his pilgrimage. He wintered at this fort. He admits most humbly that during his stay at the Lake of the Woods, he converted only a few Indians. In the spring of 1736, he was able, thanks to his natural talent to teach a few Crees in their own dialect and managed to make some improvement in his study of the Assiniboine language. He was certain that in another year he would know Cree thoroughly and have a general command of the Assiniboine tongue. He had begun the instruction of several Indians, but, on account of the scarcity of provisions, they had to go away on a hunting expedition, after a very short stay at the fort. Once gone, the neophytes were reproached by the others of the tribe for deserting the religion of their ancestors and were dissuaded from returning to the fort and the missionary.

In April 1736, Father Aulneau tells us in one of his letters, that he intended to spend part of the summer with the Assiniboines at Lake Winnipeg, they being located at the southern end of the lake. The northern part was occupied by the Crees who spread as far as Hudson Bay. Several bands of Crees also wandered on the western prairies. He also intended, after spending the summer on the shores of this lake, about All Saints day, to accompany the Assiniboines with any Frenchmen who were willing, and go to the tribes which his superior had confided to him at the outset. Such were the projects he had in mind in the spring of 1736. They were never to be realized.

The temporary abandonment of Fort Maurepas following the death of M. de la Jemmeraye, closed for the time, the road to the west. The men whom Father Aulneau had expected to recruit for his mission, were not forthcoming. In this predicament, he resolved to postpone his plans till the following spring and took the route to Michillimakinac, which was to lead to his martyrdom the night following his departure. This first martyr of the west was endowed with superior intelligence and an extremely sensitive conscience. In his letters which have been published, we can feel the pulsations of the ardent soul of an apostle and the pious longings of a saint.

For 172 years, the remains of that valiant band buried in September 1736 under the chapel of Fort St. Charles, awaited the

coming of friendly hands to be gathered and given a more worthy burial place. It is quite probable that Fathers Coquart and La Morenie, when they visited that place, said mass over their remains; but for more than 160 years their forsaken corpses were left in that deserted land, and no one seemed to remember their existence, not a tear was shed nor a prayer breathed to refresh, like a beneficent dew, their precious bones.

The forest had resumed sway over the interior of the fort and even over the chapel itself. It seemed as if their tomb would be forgotten along with the names of the 19 companions of young La Vérendrye.

According as generation after generation of Indians passed away, the mysterious shadow which shrouded the site of the fort, deepened and a deathlike silence brooded heavily over the little hidden bay at the mouth of the river. None but pagan Sautaux, and beasts of the forest, and those by accident, ever came to tread upon the soil bathed with the blood of an apostle of Christ and of a handful of heroic explorers, sons of France. God, who kept watch over the illustrious dead, inspired Monsignor Langevin, Archbishop of St. Boniface, with the desire to find their remains, at whatever cost of time or money. Joining His Grace, and offering their service to aid his efforts, came the Sons of Loyola, Oblate Fathers, some secular clergy and some of the laity. A historical society began studying the case so as to guide the searchers. Then, as though at the time appointed, Providence sends two Sautaux chiefs, both aged men, whose secrets would soon have been buried with them, who were the last keepers of the Indian tradition, to show the spot upon which the French had first landed on that beach. Their recollection of the exact location of the fort with its two rows of stakes, was rather hazy and just about fading away altogether. They at first led the searching party to the north shore nearly opposite the true location of the fort. They also knew that in the narrow cove where the fort was discovered, the French had erected some kind of building: "Our grandfathers have often told us that the men with the big canoes (the French), and the man of prayer had lived in the neighborhood." So said these Indian chiefs. Fruitless search was made the first year along the north shore. The maps sent from Paris all showed the fort on the south

shore of the lake. In August, 1908 new searches along the southern shore were crowned with success.

Fort St. Charles was identified, measured and recognized in every way. The location of the building for the men, the house of the commandant, that of the missionary, the chapel and the cemetery, are now known to us.

A plan of the fort has since been drawn, a number of articles have been collected, and, last of all, triumphant and consoling relics, the remains of the saintly Aulneau, the valiant Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye, as well as those of their companions, have been taken to St. Boniface, where they will not only henceforth be preserved but surrounded by our respect and affection.

We have dwelt at length on the gruesome tragedy of Massacre Island because, in the history of the west, it is one of the most absorbing pages, and the one best calculated to demonstrate the virile courage of the explorer, La Vérendrye.

We will now proceed with our story :

The sad news of the events that had occurred at the Lake of the Woods, did not take long to spread. Both Crees and Monsonis hurried to the fort to learn the truth of the reports. On June 26th, La Vérendrye, fearing that the Sioux, emboldened by their success, might attack him, strengthened Fort St. Charles with new works, so that, to use his own words, it was in a state of defence that four men might hold it against a hundred.

On the 9th of July, four French canoes from Kaministigoya, without loads, arrived at Fort St. Charles. They had been obliged to hide their cargoes because for lack of food they had to lighten the canoes eighty leagues from the fort and make greater speed. He was unable till August 6th to send his son after the cargoes.

The Crees and Monsonis, after discussing the sad events of the previous June, among themselves, sent four messengers to La Vérendrye, offering to come to the fort in the autumn and put him in command of their party to avenge the death of his son and the other Frenchmen. La Vérendrye replied that before taking any action he wished to hear from the governor, when he would let them know his decision. He did not fail to impress upon them how deeply he felt their demonstration of affection and devotion. But that was not all. On August 11th, the Crees and Monsonis

who were harvesting wild oats, came to express to La Vérendrye their sympathy and sorrow. They assured him that they were so grieved at the death of his son, whom they had made one of their chiefs, that they mourned him continually. They breathed nothing but revenge and were ready to rush upon their treacherous enemies. La Vérendrye succeeded in quieting them by begging that they would wait for orders from their father, the representative of the King.

At this stage we find in the journal of La Vérendrye mention of an event that throws some light upon the fight that took place upon Massacre Island. We give it word for word : "On August 18th two Monsonis, having gone the round of the Lake of the Woods, found in the southern part our two french canoes, in which the bundles were rotted, also more than 20 sioux canoes, tied two by two, in which were many blood-stains, which means that they had some of their men wounded and perhaps killed, for they have found human limbs buried in the sand. The third canoe was found on Massacre Island."

This blood and those buried limbs are clear proof that although the French were conquered by the perfidy and numbers of the Sioux, they knew how to defend themselves like brave men before they were butchered.

The Indians trembled with rage. They offered from all sides, to fight for La Vérendrye, increasing as the news of the blood spilled in the Lake of the Woods spread through their country. According to the Indian code of honor, it was unworthy of the French name to allow that crime to go unavenged in blood. The savage could not understand that true nobility of character in a man consisted in sacrificing his personal feelings on the altar of his country, and that it is more noble to forgive than to avenge.

On August 26th, 12 Crees and Assiniboines arrived with the news that their tribes had met at Fort Maurepas and had decided to invade the Sioux territory without delay. A large number of warriors would leave for the prairie and make for Point du Bois Fort, which was the usual place of meeting for the Crees, Assiniboines, and Monsonis. The Bois Fort was about 50 leagues from Fort St. Charles. They hoped that the Explorer or one of his

sons could take command of them, and that he would send them powder, shot and tobacco.

During the 12 years that La Vérendrye had spent in the west, he had concentrated all his efforts, and used the utmost ingenuity of his mind to preserve the peace among the Indian tribes. A continual state of ambush-warfare prevailed up to the time of his arrival.

It required the constant watchfulness of the missionaries for over a hundred years to overcome the habits of centuries.

When La Vérendrye saw that he could not make his voice heard above the clamor of the warriors, he called a grand council. Chief among the leaders of the Indians were La Colle for the Monsonis and La Mikouenne, for the Crees. He persuaded them that the idea of going to war at the present time when he had neither powder nor shot, was pure nonsense, and that it would be far more profitable to go hunting and gather in the crop of wild oats.

These arguments being so forceful, carried the day.

It was agreed that in order to prevent a recurrence of the disaster at Massacre Island, an escort of 50 native warriors would in the spring and fall, accompany the French canoe going to meet the merchant fleet from Michillimakinac and escort it to Fort St. Charles.

On September 14th the Crees and Assiniboines of Lake Winnipeg insisted that La Vérendrye should pay them a visit. He immediately sent his son the chevalier, to Fort Maurepas with six Frenchmen. To avoid any misunderstanding he gave his son the following written instructions:

1. To keep the natives pacified till further orders.
2. To let them expect help on the arrival of the canoes from Montreal.
3. As soon as help arrived to leave with six Frenchmen and forty or fifty Assiniboels to reconnoitre the country of the Otchipouanes, now known as Couatheattes, white men, civilized, who grow grain and live in forts and houses, and who, if the estimate of the Indians can be depended on, are not more than 150 leagues from Fort Maurepas. He entrusted his son with a casket filled with everything that might please those people, with clothing, tobacco, underwear, necklaces and a French flag.

4. To induce the Kouatheattes to send to Fort Maurepas delegates from their tribe to form an alliance with the French.

5. To tell them that the commander, (La Jemmeraye), having been very sick at the time one of their nation had come to visit him during the preceding winter, he was apprised of it only after he had left, which had caused him much regret as well as to all the French; that the fact that they did not understand his language accounted for this oversight.

6. Finally, to tell the Assiniboels and Crees that he would visit their fort at the January moon, the big moon; to invite them all there to meet him when he would make known to them the intentions of their father, the great chief of the French.

In this manner the Explorer prepared the way for his big expedition of 1738.

On September 17, 1736, La Vérendrye sent his sergeant, with six men, to bring the bodies of Father Aulneau and of his son, the 19 heads, of their companions, and the bones of about 13 of them.

They were buried the next day in the chapel of the fort. There they lay till the month of August 1908, when they were transported to St. Boniface.

In the meantime the Chevalier de La Vérendrye visited the country about Fort Maurepas, meeting the Assiniboines and seeking to pacify them. In a letter to his father, on October 9th, he tells of travelling twenty leagues from Fort Maurepas, but does not say in what direction. (1). The massacre at the Lake of the Woods was followed by many distressing events. It is necessary here to interrupt La Vérendrye's narrative to give a brief summary.

The French were aware at that time of the existence of 25 or 26 Sioux villages including the Prairie tribes.

The Ouatabatonha or River Sioux, dwelt on the Sainte Croix river or Wild Oats lake which is higher up and 15 leagues from Snake river. Their armorial bearing is a bear wounded in the neck.

(1) Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface, vol. 1, pp. 49 and 50.

The Menesohatoba or lake Sioux had the same totem as the river Sioux.

The Matatoba or prairie Sioux had for their emblem, a fox bearing an arrow in his mouth,

The Hictoba, or hunting Sioux, had for ensign a moose.

Lastly, the Titoba or Sioux of the plains, had for armorial bearing a deer whose horns were decorated with a bow. These lived 85 leagues west of Fort St. Anthony. (1)

The Sioux who surprised the French at Massacre Island, were the Matatoba from near Lac Rouge.

The Sioux, emboldened by their easy success, increased in audacity, and boasted of their deed among the other tribes, all of which began to assume dangerous attitude as though ready for an onslaught upon the white men. Le Gardeur de St. Pierre, in command at Fort Beauharnois, had already, before the massacre, complained of the hostility of the Sioux.

On May 6th, 1736, 54 warriors, looking very threatening, paraded before Fort Beauharnois. De St. Pierre inquired where they were going. They answered that they were taking a slave to the Puans tribe. On reaching the Little Illinois river, they killed two Frenchmen and scalped them.

While De St. Pierre was building another fort, 25 leagues higher up than the first, they passed again and danced the Scalp Dance. On August 23rd, 1736, these Sioux were made acquainted with what had happened at Lake of the Woods, by Sautaux, in two canoes, who brought letters from La Pointe, from Messrs. Nolan, Le Gras and Bourassa. The news, we can readily believe did not tend to quiet them. They no longer took any care to conceal their hatred for the white men.

On September 17th, 1736 a Sioux chief called at Fort Beauharnois with three young men. Hanging from his ear was a silver seal. It was Father Aulneau's seal. De St. Pierre asked him where he got it. Instead of answering, he laughed. Saint Pierre, unable to contain himself with vexation, tore jewel and ear from the Indian's head and turned him out of the fort.

Not long after this the Sioux set fire to the fort of a tribe that

(1) Margry, vol. 1, p. 518.



POWASSIN

HEAD CHIEF OF SAUTEUX, LAKE OF THE WOODS.



was friendly to the French, pulled down the fence of the Catholic Mission at Lake Pepin and burned the stakes.

The excitement grew to such a pitch that to save his garrison from being slaughtered, De St. Pierre was obliged to abandon Fort Beauharnois on May 30, 1737. (1)

In the year 1736 De Larondé was in charge at the post of Chagouamigon. This brilliant officer had accompanied D'Iberville to Hudson Bay and assisted in the famous victory won by D'Iberville. In recompense for his valuable services he had been appointed to this post in 1728. In a letter of July 22nd, 1736, he informs Governor Beauharnois that he had severely reprimanded the Sautaux for making war upon the Lake Sioux because it was not that tribe which had killed their chief but the Prairie Sioux. They admitted his correctness, but maintained that the Prairie Sioux had killed 22 Frenchmen and they wanted to avenge the French. De Larondé goes on to say: "This report is unfortunately true for I have seen a sun dial and other articles which belonged to the missionary; but I could not get the chalice which was thrown into the river by a squaw on account of her sons' death. (2)

The author just quoted tells also that the Sioux who had killed the French at the Lake of the Woods lived in the Thousand Lakes and were at war with the Ojibways and Crees. He tells us also that the Sioux wanted to trade the sun dial and other things they had taken from the French for goods at Chagouamigon. (3)

Giving an account of this affair to the French court, Governor Beauharnois on October 12th, 1736, said that this distressful event had the effect of reducing the profits of the fur trade and that the Prairie Sioux who did it had taken a number of beaver skins and stripped them.

Those who envied La Vérendrye did not fail to profit by the misfortune of the Lake of the Woods, to ruin his credit at the French court where he was already suffering from evil reports. They succeeded only too well. De Maurepas, giving ear to the

(1) Margry, vol. 6, pp. 575, 576, 577, 580.

(2) The Aborigines of Minnesota, 1911, p. 531.

(3) Margry, vol. 6, p. 574.

calumniators wrote to Governor Beauharnois on April 22nd, 1737: "Everything I have heard concerning the cause of that accident strengthens me in my opinion that I always held, and never took the trouble to conceal from you, that trading in beaver skins was ever more important in the eyes of de La Vérendrye than the discovery of the Western Sea. That calumny was to attach itself to the Explorer and follow him to his grave.

But it is ever the distinguishing trait of true greatness to bear with resignation and magnanimity the hardest trials of life. Neither the tragic fate of his own relatives, nor the gross injustice of the court could chill the ardor of his zeal in his country's service nor check his westward march.

On October 15th 1736, nine Cree and Assiniboine canoes from Fort Maurepas reached Fort St. Charles.

We notified you several times already, "they told the Explorer," that we are sick at heart and cannot but mourn the death of your son and the French. We intend to avenge them and we come to ask you to lead us. If you are unable to walk we will carry you. We invite La Colle as well, and all Crees and Monsonis. There are now about 800 Assiniboines and Crees at the Pointe du Bois Fort waiting for us."

They asked him as a favor to let them have one of his sons for the winter at Fort Maurepas, and to let them adopt his son the Chevalier as a chief in place of his brother.

According to his custom in such cases, the Explorer postponed his reply till the following day. After consulting with La Colle, a clever man of sound judgment, and Mikouenne, chief of a band of Crees he answered as follows:

"I want you to know, my children, that the French do not wage war unless they have consulted their father, and then only at his command. You understand therefore, that however much I am injured, my hands are tied, I thank you for your sympathy in the death of the Frenchmen, and especially in that of my dear son, who loved you sincerely. You know that there are Frenchmen in the Sioux country and it would not do to cause new bloodshed by avenging old." He begged them to postpone their warlike expedition to a more opportune season. "I have long desired," he went on, "to go to your country at Fort Maurepas. I

will certainly go next winter and when there I will inform you as to what our Father wants done."

La Colle held a conference with the chiefs of the three nations and spoke in their name: "When you came to our country you gave us what we needed. You promised to continue doing so. We wanted for nothing for two years; but now we are in need of everything, through the fault of the traders. You forbade us to go to the English; we obeyed you, and if now we are compelled to go to them to get guns, powder, shot, pails, tobacco and such articles you have only your people to blame." Then La Colle presented La Vérendrye with a necklace to assure him that they were all French at heart. He requested that he go to Montreal to plead their cause and take with him La Mikouenne's brother. While awaiting his return he promised that they would remain with his sons to guard the forts; but that in the spring they would all join and make war on the Sioux to avenge the blood of the French. But as the warriors had promised to repair to the Bois Fort, nothing could prevent them.

When they had started, La Colle sent a box of tobacco after them to stop them. As it was very far on in the fall, (November, 1736,) the expedition did not go any farther, and the campaign was postponed till the following year.

On October 22nd, six canoes, carrying no cargoes, and 29 men, reached Fort St. Charles. The men told the Explorer that they had left their small loads of goods at Vermillon river, en route from Michillimakinac. Vermillon river rises in Minnesota in a lake of the same name, and flows into the western part of Lac la Croix. Bourassa and Eustache had stayed at that river with 12 men one winter, to the prejudice of Fort St. Pierre.

On October 24th, the last council with the Crees and Monsonis was held. La Vérendrye gave them powder and shot with which to hunt, and received about a dozen bags of wild oats in return.

When the Indians had left, he proposed to the clerks of the company to send two or three canoes to Fort Maurepas, as he had promised to his son to do. They refused and asked him to bring back the five men who had gone. La Vérendrye pointed out the urgent need of sending for the bundles that had been cached at Savanne portage the preceding spring. The clerks would not

agree to that either but preferred to wait till the lake froze over. Consequently there was a delay till the 26th of November. When La Vérendrye's son reached the cache at the portage he discovered that 26 of the bundles had been stolen by the Indians and sold to the English at Hudson Bay.

As we have just shown, La Vérendrye was far from being absolute master of his posts or his men. True he still remained commander of the expedition. It was he who called the council when necessary to give out his orders. The safety of the fort was in his hands; he ordered guard mounting, placing of sentinels, ringing the curfew, reviewing the garrison, etc. but the traders, their clerks and employees had their attention fastened on the making of profits of fur trading, and when they thought their interests might suffer by La Vérendrye's plans for pushing his explorations, the latter were often compelled to take second place in their narrow minds.

When on the 8th of December, he saw no news had come from Fort Maurepas, he sent some men *by the Savanne Portage, and across country to the Red River*. The orders of La Vérendrye to Bourassa to leave Vermillon river could not have been obeyed since the winter was so far advanced when he received them. Another reason was that a large number of Sautaux had sought protection by joining him, as they feared the Sioux. One of these Sautaux had been with the war party that had perpetrated the murders at Massacre Island. The French tried hard to get details of that tragedy from him, he absolutely refused to open his mouth. On December 27th, La Vérendrye sent a letter by one of the clerks of the company, Mr. Douère, to Vermillon river, to Bourassa and Eustache, commanding them to build a small fort around the two houses they had built, as a means of protecting themselves better from any attack by the Sioux, and to go to Fort St. Pierre in the spring. (1)

On February 8th, 1737, La Vérendrye set out from Fort St. Charles for Fort Maurepas, accompanied by his two sons, ten of the Frenchmen and a large band of Indians. On February 25th he reached Fort Maurepas, which he had never yet seen. It is

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, pp. 51, 52, 53.

presumed that he went via Savanne Portage and La Barrière. He decided then to move Fort Maurepas to the main arm of the Red River, where the Assiniboines were waiting for him.

As our narrative proceeds we will see that this change was not carried out as he became acquainted with the topography of the country in the year following.

On March 11th, 1737, he retraced his steps to Fort St. Charles and on the 3rd of June following, set out for Montreal with 14 canoes loaded with furs.

On June 25th he was at Kaministiquia on July 22nd, at Michillimakinac and left there for Montreal on August 3rd, 1737. He got a rather cool reception at Montreal, being given to understand that if in his dealings with the Indians he had shown more prudence and less avidity for profits, he might have been able to avoid the disaster that had befallen him. These heavy blows of misfortune, to which were added the bitterest reproaches, served only to bring out the real nobility of soul and strength of character of the Explorer. Nothing could daunt his determination to acquire for his fatherland, the plains of the west.

Accordingly he set about the organization of a new party of exploration. On October 17th, he wrote to the colonial minister, M. de Maurepas, informing him that the profits of fur trading would not suffice to meet the heavy expenses of exploring the wild territory and building so many forts. He made it clear to him also, that on account of his own financial position, and the death of his son and nephew, he was compelled to postpone his further travels; but he hoped, nevertheless, to obtain additional advances from his merchants.

This was a forceful answer to his calumniators who said that his trading had made him rich.

As a recognition of his services, and as a means of providing for the most pressing needs of his family, he asked to be given command of a company.

After many delays and repeated refusals, he finally succeeded in equipping another expedition and set out once more for the west.

DEPARTURE FOR THE WEST, SPRING 1738.—HIS SONS
CONTINUE TRADING IN HIS ABSENCE.—FORT
LA REINE BUILT, OCTOBER 1738, AND FORT
ROUGE AT THE FOURCHE, (WINNIPEG.)

La Vérendrye left Montreal on June 18th, 1738 and reached Michillimakinac on July 20th, and left there with an outfit of 6 canoes and 22 men.

While he had been away his sons had continued trading at Forts St. Pierre and St. Charles and Maurepas; they kept the Indians friendly and made further collections of information regarding the country. The Explorer had four sons who were connected with his expeditions. The eldest had been killed in 1736 at Massacre Island, and the other three were intrusted with the task of visiting the surrounding territory while their father attended to the general management of the forts and the finances of the expedition. On August 5th, he arrived at fort "Kaministigoya" and on the 22nd of August he reached Fort St. Pierre. He was warmly received by the Crees who called him their father. He was told that a small band had gone on the war path against the Sioux. During his absence 300 Monsonis and 250 Crees had left to attack the Sioux and avenge the French. A few days later they had been followed by 800 Assiniboines. Smallpox, which they had caught while on a visit to the English posts at Hudson Bay, spread rapidly among them, with the result that their expedition was rendered futile. (1)

The Explorer arrived at Fort St. Charles again on August 31st, 1738. He called together the three chiefs, La Collé, La Micouenne and Le Chenail, and conveyed to them the instructions of the governor, which were that hostilities against the Sioux were to cease and that all attention must be given to hunting.

La Micouenne's brother, an aged and influential man of the tribe, who had accompanied La Vérendrye to Montreal never omitted an opportunity to dwell with pride upon the kindness and good treatment he had enjoyed at the hands of the governor.

(1) Rev. Fr. Morice, *History of Catholic Church*, p. 35.

La Colle, acting as spokesman for the three, said he would never cease to mourn for La Vérendrye's son and the Frenchmen; that the lake was still tinged with their blood which cried out for vengeance, but, it belonged to their father to forgive or punish, and in obedience to his wishes they would not leave their lands, but would not give up the hope that some day, he would punish the Sioux for their crime. At their urgent request, he consented to give them his son, the Chevalier Pierre Gaultier, as their chief at Fort St. Charles. The latter had already been adopted as chief of the Indians of the Lake of the Woods, on the death of his elder brother Jean-Baptiste.

On account of having promised de Lamarque to wait for him, La Vérendrye postponed his departure several times in order to allow the other to join him. He had arranged with de Lamarque at Michillimakinac, to visit the Mandans together in the fall. But as de Lamarque was so slow in coming, and the season was getting advanced, he finally set out on September 11th, with six well stocked canoes, taking along his two sons, François and Louis-Joseph.

On September 22nd, he reached Fort Maurepas, where M. D'Amours de Louvières was in command with 14 men, as clerk for the men who supplied La Vérendrye's expedition. He made no delay there for the next day he resumed his journey, entering Lake Winnipeg, having taken five men from Fort Maurepas to increase his company. As his route lay by Fort aux Roseaux La Vérendrye made it a point to halt and spend a short time in prayer at the cross raised to mark the resting place of the mortal remains of his nephew, La Jemmeraye. On September 24th, he reached the mouth of the Assiniboine river. Thus the site now occupied by the capital of Manitoba, was first trodden by the foot of a white man on September 24th, 1738.

La Micouenne's brother who had made the trip to Montreal with him, was also in this party and acted as interpreter.

La Vérendrye found ten Cree huts, and two tribal chiefs on the banks of the Assiniboine river. These Indians, having had notice of his coming, were waiting for him with a big supply of provisions. As they wished to banquet him, they invited him to

spend some time with them. To this he consented and took both chiefs to his tent.

The account of the good treatment received by the interpreter had an excellent effect upon the dispositions of the Indians. La Vérendrye then told them what he had heard of rumors to the effect that the English at the Bay had given a necklace and other presents to one of them to induce them to cause the French trouble.

The Indians assured him that there was no foundation for those rumors and that the English entertained no evil intentions toward the French. As long as the French remained with them the Indians promised not to go to the Bay. One of the Indians told the explorer that he had led a war party against the Sioux to avenge the son of La Vérendrye, who was the first white man to build a fort in their country. He was far from satisfied with that expedition because he had conquered only the men from six huts. He asked where La Vérendrye wanted to go. He said the Assiniboine was very low and that there was danger of breaking their canoes. "The Indians you are going to visit," he said, "do not know how to hunt the beaver, but are very worthless people, who dress only in buffalo skins and have never seen a Frenchman."

La Vérendrye replied that he hoped this fall to get to the nation of white people, (the Mandans,) of whom he had heard so much. It was his intention to ascend the river as far as possible in order to reach the Mandans whom he had received instructions to visit; that he wanted to teach the Assiniboines how to hunt the beaver, and that, in the year following, he would take a different route, so as to explore the whole country.

On September 26th he resumed his western journey. As the summer had been dry, the Assiniboine was very low. He found it full of shallows, with a strong current, and bordered with trees of fine foliage sheltering buffalo and deer in abundance. In order to lighten the canoes, he decided to travel along the prairie with all the men not needed to paddle the canoes. He encountered large bands of Assiniboines who had come to meet him and turned them to follow him. He proceeded thus for six days, *making good use of the time* to use his own words. On October 2nd he was told that the river was too shallow to allow of any farther advance by canoe. Where he stopped that evening, there was quite a

growth of trees, at a certain portage which the Indians used to cross to reach Lac des Prairies, (Lake Manitoba.)

After crossing this lake lengthwise, the Indians used to traverse Lakes Winnipegosis and Bourbon (Cedar,) and went down the Saskatchewan river to Grand Rapids, entering Lake Winnipeg there, and by Nelson or Hayes river, reached the sea.

The Indians understood that this portage was a strategical point, for they strongly advised him to build a fort there. "Here you will stop everybody," they said. It was the policy of the French to do so. Thus they isolated the posts of the English at the Bay, cut off their supplies, and intercepted the furs going north.

It was for this very purpose that the forts at Lake Nepigon had been established. It was carrying out the same plan that La Vérendrye had erected forts at Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Winnipeg River, and finally another here at this portage. In this way he was able to control the trade of the big western lakes. We will see, later on, how he closed the gate of western trade entirely upon the English, on the Saskatchewan river completing a girdle about the Bay, intercepting all the furs taken by the Indians.

This last fort was called "Fort la Reine," nowadays known as Portage la Prairie. According to his calculations it was 180 miles from the Fork, (Winnipeg,) by the route followed by the canoes, but 35 or 40 leagues by land.

On October 3rd he made a start on the erection of the fort and several houses for the workmen. Everything was finished by the 15th of the month. That was making very good progress. On October 9th, M. de la Marque, his brother Nolant, and 8 other Frenchmen, reached Fort la Reine in two canoes. M. de la Marque reported to La Vérendrye that he had left 8 men and two traders at Fort St. Charles. M. de la Marque who had been several days march behind the explorer, had brought M. de Louvières from Fort Maurepas to the Fork with two canoes, leaving him there to build a fort for the use of the men of the Red River region. La Vérendrye approved the work of M. de la Marque.

It may be noted in passing, that an incident occurred here to show how little La Vérendrye thought of making profit. M.

de la Marque offered to La Vérendrye to bear the expenses of his men while they were at the fort. La Vérendrye would not accept but insisted on assuming the expenses himself; on the grounds that they were helping him in his exploration. Moreover, he had a house built for them inside Fort la Reine.

TWO SUBSIDIARY FORTS.—THE FIRST ON THE PIGUIS RESERVE, THE SECOND ON THE SOUTH SHORE OF THE ASSINIBOINE BY M. DE LOUVIÈRES, (D'AMOURS) —SITE OF FORT LA REINE.—OLD NAMES OF THE ASSINIBOINE RIVER AND RED RIVER.

We believe that the question so long disputed as to the existence of a fort at the mouth of the Red River and another at the mouth of the Assiniboine, offers little doubt at the present day, thanks to the discovery of historical documents of the greatest value. These two forts actually existed, though for a very short time only.

The former, as we have already stated, was built in July or August 1734 about six miles north of Selkirk on the west bank of the Red River. This fort was later abandoned. It was a sort of stopping place for the French from Fort la Reine, who in passing might rest there over night and make a fresh start in the morning; but its proximity to Fort Maurepas, took away most of its importance. A map entitled, "A true copy of the original map drawn by Messrs. Jérémie and Varenne de La Vérendrye," places this fort at the mouth of the Red. The same location is found on another map prepared by M. Dussieux, professor of history in the Ecole Polytechnique de France.

The second subsidiary fort was located at the mouth of the Assiniboine, emptying into the Red. It was built in 1738, by M. de Louvières, (D'Amours,) on the southern bank of the Assiniboine. On a map prepared in 1750 from the memoirs of La Vérendrye, (manuscript of Father Martin,) this fort appears on the right side of the mouth of the Assiniboine and is marked "old fort." On Jeffrey's map (1762,) it is marked "abandoned." Hence we are justified in assuming that this little fort met practically the same fate as that of the Piguis.

When the sons of La Vérendrye began their exploration of Dauphin and Bourbon Lakes, and Saskatchewan River, we can see that these little forts were abandoned for lack of men to do business there and also because Forts Maurepas and la Reine removed most of their usefulness.

Now as to Fort la Reine. Where was it built? Here, again, the ruins even, have disappeared.

Most writers place it at Portage la Prairie, and in this they are in accord with the tradition preserved in that part of the country. By following the windings of the Assiniboine, we find the distance mentioned by La Vérendrye, 180 miles. Speaking of Fort Dauphin, the Explorer says that to get there from Fort la Reine, "there is a portage of three leagues to the northeast, to reach Lac des Prairies, (Manitoba.)"

Well, at Portage la Prairie we find a watercourse known as "Portage Creek," which flows to the Assiniboine River and stretches northeast to Lake Manitoba. This creek may be 12 miles long, from Portage la Prairie to the lake; but we know that the waters of Lake Manitoba have receded and that in former times they flooded the southern shore which even in our day is low and marshy ground. So that in La Vérendrye's time this creek could not have been more than 9 miles long from the lake to the Assiniboine River, especially if we reckon that this part of the country has been thoroughly drained by the settlers. In the spring when ice jams in the Assiniboine, it often happens that the water overflows the sand bar at the mouth of that creek and flows off to the lake. Those who hold a different opinion believe that the fort was built at the junction of the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers, at a point known at present as "Two Rivers." About 12 or 15 miles north there are two water courses emptying into Lake Manitoba, after following a northeastern direction. These are named "Pine Creek," and "Boggy Creek," and are three times the length indicated by La Vérendrye for the portage. Here we find a long portage by land and a still longer one by water. It is impossible to reconcile the memoirs of the Explorer with the portage he mentions, if we locate Fort la Reine at this point, (Two Rivers.) A map of the marine department prepared from the memoirs of La Vérendrye about 1740, places Fort la Reine at Portage la Prairie.

All the proofs we have just adduced seem to solve the problem and settle it definitely. Nevertheless it is quite probable that the French built some kind of fort at the junction of the Souris and Assiniboine, for the accommodation of the missionaries going there to instruct the Indians. In the documents taken from the archives, we find the following: "The St. Pierre River, (Souris,) a branch of the Assiniboels, was at the centre, a point from which the explorers set forth for their expeditions north and south. It is on its waters that they are found, at the close of 1738, making their way to the Mandanes' territory, and in 1742, going toward the upper Missouri, ascending that river as far as Yellowstone, and finally arriving by that route at the Rocky Mountains." This name, Yellow-Stone, tells us plainly that it was given from conclusions drawn by modern authors, and recent interpretations of the memoirs of La Vérendrye. In order to prove that at the time the French were there, a subsidiary post existed at the junction of the two rivers, we can cite the following fact. Harmon, in the record of his voyage to the North-West in 1804, (Journal, 1820, by Daniel Harmon,) states that 50 years after the last French missionary had gone from the station on the Souris River, the Indians still remembered the prayers he had taught them.

Now, the last missionary that lived in the North-West under the French regime, was Father de la Morinie, who wintered at Fort la Reine in 1750 and 1751. He left this fort in June 1751. It is not impossible that Father de la Morinie may have visited this part of the Souris River to teach the natives during the winter. I believe that in locating Fort la Reine at Portage la Prairie and admitting that a small post might have been established where the Souris empties into the Assiniboine, everything may be explained and reconciled.

Here we interrupt our narrative to dwell upon a historical fact which we have not seen elsewhere.

Some men who knew all the country well, say that if we accept the tradition prevailing among the Indians, the Assiniboine River was in former times called the Castor (Beaver) River. The first explorers who understood but imperfectly the Cree dialect, mistook "Amusqua Sipi," which means Beaver River, for "Misqua Sipi," which means Red River. But the north arm of the Assini-

boine nevertheless, kept its name of Beaver River, Amusqua, the name which it has kept till the present day. But, while the notion existing at that time was that the Red River emptied into the Assiniboine at Winnipeg, La Vérendrye called that part of the Red known in that period as "La Sablonnière," extending from the city of Winnipeg to Lake Winnipeg, "Misqua Sipi," or Red River. He changed the name of the Assiniboine from the old designation to the one it now bears, out of consideration for the Assiniboine nation through whose hunting grounds it flows.

It would appear then that before the time of La Vérendrye, the Indians called the Assiniboine by the name Beaver, (Castor,) and that at Winnipeg it absorbed, as one of its tributaries, the waters of the River La Sablonnière and continued on its way to Lake Winnipeg under the name "Beaver River," (Castor.)

EXPEDITION OF LA VERENDRYE TO THE MANDANES

FROM OCTOBER 18th, 1738, TO FEBRUARY 10th,

1738.—REMARKS ON THE MANDANES.

On October 18th, 1738, three days after the completion of Fort la Reine, La Vérendrye set out to visit the land of the Mandanes, of whom he had so often heard the Assiniboines and Crees speak.

He left his new fort in the care of one of his followers, Sanschagrin, a man of intelligence, wise and careful, and left with him two soldiers and ten men.

With him he took his two sons, de la Marque, M. Nolant, brother of the latter, his servant, a slave, 20 men, a few Indians, making a party of 52 in all.

On the third day out they came to an Assiniboine village of 40 huts, where they were obliged to stop at the invitation of the chief who wished to entertain them to a buffalo feast.

On October 21st, the Explorer reached the first mountain, 26 leagues from Fort la Reine. The Assiniboines learning of his arrival, came from all parts of the country to meet him. More than 600 Indians followed him, so that his camp looked like a big village of 102 tepees. Everywhere the Indians showed the most

friendly disposition toward him, even shedding tears of joy at meeting him and imploring him to adopt them as his children. This rite of adoption consisted in placing his hands on the heads of the chiefs, who in turn did the same to him, and wept.

La Vérendrye says it is 300 miles from Fort la Reine to the Mandane villages, and that it took him 46 days to cover the distance. He says he could have performed the journey in 26 days, were it not that the Indians were in any hurry to proceed, ambling and staggering to right and left, and stopping when the fancy took them, to hunt buffalo.

That is indeed the way of those nomadic tribes. They loved to lounge about their tents, in a cloud of smoke, wrapped in endless reveries, so long as the provisions hold out.

To guard against surprise on the march, the Assiniboinés advanced in three columns. On the wings, the scouts kept a sharp lookout over the prairie to see if there were any Sioux. The old men and the women were in the centre column.

No sooner did the vanguard descry a herd of buffalo than they set up a shout which was echoed in all parts of the company. The hunters, riding the swiftest ponies, rushed out at once and hemming in the cattle killed them. As there were always more than enough, each took what parts pleased him best. As soon as the vanguard halted, the whole army halted, willingly or not. The women and the dogs carried all the baggage, the husband carrying nothing but his weapons. Most of the time the dogs also carried the fire wood for the camp fires when the party crossed treeless plains.

On November 28th they arrived at the place appointed for a meeting. That same evening a Mandane chief with 30 of his tribesmen and 4 Assiniboinés appeared before La Vérendrye and presented him with some corn on the cob and some leaf tobacco, not particularly good. The explorer having expected to meet white or nearly white men, was much surprised to find that they were scarcely different from the other tribes.

The Mandanes, as their sole article of clothing, wore a buffalo robe carelessly thrown over the shoulders.

The chief, addressing La Vérendrye, assured him the Mandanes were very glad to have the French visit them and invited

him to his fort, the smallest of the six of his nation, and the one farthest from the river. According to the Indian custom, the Mandanes, as hosts of the Assiniboinés, were supposed to provide hospitably for them. Therefore, the chief, seeing the number of guests he would have, was quick to reckon how many mouths there would be to feed. To get around this expensive difficulty, he resorted to *tratagem*. He told the Assiniboinés he was glad they had arrived just then as he would be glad of their aid in case the Sioux came, this being the time they usually put in an appearance. He welcomed the French on the same account. The Assiniboinés, La Vérendrye says, were not any too brave, though strong and wiry. They considered the Sioux a superior nation. The Mandanés, knowing this trait of Assiniboine character, knew also when and how to take advantage of it. La Vérendrye admits, ingenuously that he allowed himself to be deceived like the others. He assured the Mandanes that he would be glad to encounter the Sioux, with whom he had an account to settle, and that if they came to attack the party, he would go out to meet them.

The Assiniboinés at first were inclined to measures of prudence, and advised La Vérendrye not to go any farther. He however, expressed his firm determination to proceed, at no matter what cost. The Assiniboinés, being ashamed to desert him, decided, on the request of one of their oldest, to leave most of the women and the children in care of a guard of warriors, and proceed with La Vérendrye. The Mandanes began trading then giving the Assiniboinés grain, tobacco and painted feathers for guns, powder and shot.

On November 30 the whole outfit started on the move again. It comprised 600 men. The third day after that, they found themselves seven leagues from the first Mandane fort. La Vérendrye noticed that the Assiniboine who had taken his leather bag from a slave who was carrying it, the Assiniboine pretending to relieve the slave, had gone back to the Assiniboine camp. This bag contained his papers and other articles for his own use. La Vérendrye sent two young men after the thief. They succeeded in overtaking him, and recovering the bag and contents, at the Assiniboine camp, but for fear of the Sioux they did not bring them to the Mandane country. At a little river, about four miles

from the Mandane fort, a large party of natives awaited him. They had lit a big fire and gave him cooked corn and dough mixed with pumpkin for a meal. After resting for a couple of hours, he set out again for the fort. He made one of his sons carry the painted flag of France in front. The Mandanes refused to let La Vérendrye walk, though he would have preferred to do so, and they carried him; as he did not want to offend them.

Four acres from the fort, on a slight elevation, a number of the old men from the fort, with many young men waited for him, presented him with the pipe of peace, and showed him the two necklaces he had sent to them four or five years previous.

They gave him a seat, and one to de la Marque. La Vérendrye made his son, the chevalier, take the Frenchmen and stand four paces in front, with the flag. The Assiniboinés formed a line like the French with those that carried firearms. These all fired three volleys in salute to the fort. Assiniboinés and Mandanes thronged the ramparts, lined the ditches and in the midst of the most extravagant demonstrations of joy, La Vérendrye entered the fort on December 3rd, escorted by French and Assiniboinés. The Frenchmen were conducted to the tent of the head chief. The crowd was so great that they climbed on one another's shoulders to see the newcomers. The chief ordered the tent cleared but La Vérendrye discovered, to his great embarrassment, that the bag containing the presents intended for the chiefs, had disappeared. In spite of the most thorough search, the bag could not be found. It was impossible to place the blame whether on Assiniboinés or Mandanes, for the hut was occupied by many of both when the bag was stolen. Further, the Mandane chief admitted that some of the young men in that tribe were rather unscrupulous. It was La Vérendrye's intention to spend the winter in the Mandanes country as he wanted to study both country and people thoroughly. He sent four Frenchmen with news to Fort la Reine.

The Mandanes were highly skilled in dressing buffalo and deer skins. They ornamented them with excellent designs representing animals of all kinds. They were equally expert in dying feathers and could make innumerable articles of ornamental and useful kinds, especially toilet articles. The Mandanes were pretty tricky traders. They acquired the goods of the Assiniboinés giving





in exchange only trifles. As the latter were in no hurry to go home, the Mandanes spread a rumor of the approach of the Sioux, and prepared for war. On December 6th, the Assiniboines having no desire to measure arms with the Sioux, beat a hasty retreat. They left five of their young men with La Vérendrye, to act as his guides on his return journey.

La Vérendrye soon suffered a set back that was rather serious. It hindered his gathering knowledge of the Mandanes and their country. He had been assured of the services of a young Cree interpreter, who was a fluent Assiniboine speaker. The chevalier La Vérendrye spoke Cree very well. The Cree interpreter translated into Assiniboine dialect what the explorer wanted to say to the Assiniboines and Mandanes, and many of the Mandanes were quite conversant with the Assiniboine tongue and told the Mandane chiefs what was intended to reach them and translated their replies.

Well, this young Cree interpreter, head over heels in love with a young Assiniboine belle, found himself deserted by her. Without the slightest consideration for the position he was putting his master in, he set off in haste to overtake his faithless sweet-heart.

La Vérendrye found among the Mandanes, buffalo skins in white and other colors, and horns so large that cups and other vessels could be made from them.

The Mandanes had six forts, five of which were along the banks of the Missouri and the sixth was set on a slight hill in the open prairie. One of these forts had 130 huts, arranged in a row like a street. As they were all lined up alike the French often lost their way in those villages, where the cleanliness was remarkable. The ramparts protecting them were smooth and wide. The palisades rested on wooden bars fixed in grooves on stakes 15 feet high. In the most critical places they were strengthened by raw buffalo hides. The walls were protected by a ditch 15 feet deep and from 15 to 18 feet wide so that these forts were proof against any attack from other Indians.

The Mandanes were lighter complexioned than the other Indian tribes and a large proportion of their women had blond or white hair. All their belongings were kept in bags that hung on

posts. Planks divided their houses, which were clean and spacious, into several rooms.

The fort at which La Vérendrye stopped was on a hill on the open prairie. It was impossible to enter it except on a gangway of wood, which the Indians removed as soon as it was used, for fear of the Sioux. The Mandanes seemed to be a nation of mixed blood. Their women were rather pretty, especially those with the fairer complexion. Both men and women were industrious and clean. They used earthen vessels to cook their food. Their clothing and utensils used on their travels were carefully kept in bags hanging on posts.

The men wore nothing but buffalo robe. Their beds, surrounded with skins, looked like coffins. Their cellars were well stocked with wheat, meat, fat, and furs. Both men and women adorned themselves with tattooing, using various designs. They manufactured both wickerware and earthenware. They cultivated maize, beans, and pumpkins, and indulged in a sort of ball game, for amusement, that was very interesting, being played in the square or on the ramparts. Having unfailing appetites, they gorged themselves with meat at their banquets.

Every day they brought to the explorer over 20 dishes of maize, beans and pumpkins, cooked to a turn.

The men were big and stout with a prepossessing face. On the orders of La Vérendrye, the chevalier, M. Nolant and six other Frenchmen, went to visit the next nearest fort. It was situated on the bank of the river and was twice as big as the first one. The same order prevailed there. The streets and squares were fine and spacious. All the other forts were built on the same plan except that the last one down the river was larger than the others because the Panana Indians were their neighbors on that side. In the plains contiguous to these forts were smaller ones containing from 40 to 50 huts which, at the time were unoccupied.

Their villages were situated in latitude 48° 12', north. It is quite clear that the stock from which the Mandanes were sprung was very different from the other tribes. Their neighbours were the Pananas and the Pananis, with whom they maintained treaties up to 1734, and were close friends for a long time. They built

their forts and huts alike. The latter appeared to be a tribe of the Mandan family that had become separated from the rest.

The Pananis had horses and rode on excursions to great distances, down the Missouri and Mississippi as far as the Spanish settlements.

We find in La Vérendrye's memoir, two phrases that have been adopted in the northwest and are still in use. One is "Ile de Bois," meaning a bunch of trees on the prairie like an island in the sea. The other is "Sans Dessein," "without plan". These two words have many meanings and are capable of application in a variety of ways. They have been greatly abused in the North-West. It seemed as though the old settlers could apply these words to everything.

The generally accepted meaning was and is yet, one with no fixed preconceived idea, or, one of little importance, without humor or worthless.

Several reasons influenced La Vérendrye to change his original plan of spending the winter with the Mandanes. The robbery of which he was the victim and the large number of presents he had been obliged to give the Indians, had consumed his whole stock. Among the Indians, as among the whites, everywhere, life is a bitter experience for the one who has neither money nor its equivalent, for he is friendless.

La Vérendrye was, all the time, royally entertained, but, in return he was expected to give gratuities of powder, shot, knives, tobacco, etc. Moreover, he was without the services of an interpreter, and could but imperfectly convey his wishes and necessities by means of signs. He was afraid, too, that in the spring, the high waters would prevent him from being present at the departure of the canoes for the east. He dreaded also running out of powder and being unable to pay for the services of the escort that was to guide him back. Accordingly, he decided to return, and said good bye to the Mandanes earlier than he had at first intended. He left two Frenchmen with the Mandanes to learn their language, one in each of two forts. One of these belonged to M. de la Marque's party. He could write, and La Vérendrye says he depended on him as a man of intelligence, to make notes on the natives and the country. The second, one of La Vérendrye's own

company, was of a high order of intelligence, had a splendid memory and a marked facility for learning languages.

La Vérendrye adds, with emphasis, the following note: "He was a very wise and god-fearing man." Having given them both instructions as to their conduct among these heathen people, he promised to return for them in the course of the following summer.

He notified the five Assiniboines who had remained with him among the Mandanes of his intention of leaving. They were sorry and would have detained him if they could. He sent two Frenchmen, on December 8th, with two Assiniboines, to the Assiniboine village with notice of his intended departure.

The Mandanes brought him a large quantity of maize flour and he gave them in return, some needles, which they valued highly. He presented their head chief with a flag and a lead tablet with a ribbon at each corner. The chief put it carefully away in a box, with the intention of preserving it permanently as a souvenir of the event, to mark the taking possession of the country in the name of the King of France.

La Vérendrye adds on this incident: "It will be better preserved by being handed down from father to son, than if it had been buried in the ground, as it might be stolen from such a resting place." On that very evening, La Vérendrye took very sick and was obliged to keep to his bed for three days.

Although not quite recovered, he set out on December 13th, after requesting the chiefs to be kind to the two guests he was leaving with them.

On December 24th, having been very ill all the time, he reached the Assiniboine village; he suffered severely from the extreme cold on the way. He was very glad, however, to recover his box; and to his great surprise, there was nothing missing from it. They had been satisfied with emptying the bag the slave had carried.

He met an Assiniboine who declared that the year previous he had gone down the river (Missouri and Mississippi,) as far as the sea, and that he had attacked a white horseman who was encased in iron, killed the horse and was about to cut off the man's head when other horsemen put him to flight.

The explorer rested three days in the Assiniboine village and on January 9th, 1739, reached the first mountain. The cold at that period was intense, and the travellers suffered extremely by the severity of the climate. To tell the truth, sleeping on the open prairie, when the mercury is more than 50 degrees below zero, is not a very tempting amusement. La Vérendrye's illness had developed so dangerously that he did not possess the strength to proceed. After hoping for a few days that La Vérendrye's condition would improve, M. de la Marque, took it upon himself to hasten on in advance to the fort and bring help. He reached Fort la Reine, February 1st. La Vérendrye was able to travel a little, but he met the relief party 35 miles from the fort. He did not reach the fort, however, till February 10th. "I have never," says La Vérendrye "endured so much hardship, sickness and fatigue, as on that journey. No one could bear more."

After fifteen days rest, he managed to recover. There were then in Fort la Reine, 42 men. The Indians supplied them from time to time with moose and deer meat which constituted the chief staples of their commissariat.

M. de la Marque left almost immediately for Fort Maurepas whence he wrote La Vérendrye on February 16th. In April de la Marque went up the Winnipeg river to visit a camp of Indians who were repairing canoes (1).

(1) La Vérendrye's journal, 1738-39, published in Reports of the Canadian Archives by D. Brymner, 1889, p. 1 et seq.

EXPLORATION OF CHEVALIER LA VÉRENDRYE ABOUT MANITOBA, DAUPHIN, WINNIPEGOSIS AND BOURBON LAKES AND THE SASKATCHEWAN RIVER IN 1739.—DEPARTURE OF LA VÉRENDRYE FOR MONTREAL IN 1740, IN THE SPRING.—HIS RETURN TO FORT LA REINE IN THE AUTUMN OF 1741.—SENDS HIS TWO SONS TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1742.—DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS OUTFITTERS.

The Explorer was extremely anxious to survey the country about his fort, so as to know the best routes to take in pushing farther into the west. On April 16th, he sent his son with an Indian to Prairie Lake, (Manitoba,) to pick out a suitable site for a fort. The chevalier was to take note of the rivers emptying into the lake, especially the White River, which the Explorer wanted to ascend, as soon as the canoes came back. The chevalier was to make the circuit of the lake, and inspect a mine of which the Indians had spoken, and to go to the mouth of the Poskoyac River, at Lake Winnipeg, to see if there was not a good site for another fort. (1).

The Christineaux wanted him to build a fort farther north, and urged him to get to the Saskatchewan river early in the spring, so as to intercept the fur canoes going to the Bay. Chevalier La Vérendrye was instructed therefore to inspect the mouth of the Saskatchewan at Lake Winnipeg, to see if it was not advantageous to locate a fort there. He was to take what measures were necessary to prevent the Indians from going on to the sea.

In May the Explorer had been told by the Indians that the Poskoyac, (Saskatchewan) River extended a long way west. "I have discovered," he says, "a river that flows west. All the rivers and lakes I had found so far, flowed to the Hudson Bay, the sea of the north, except the Mandanes river, (Missouri.) I will explore this discovery this summer, either personally or by my agents. He had found a route that would take him, by water, to the summit of the Rockies." (2)

While his son was reconnoitring the vast territory north of Lake Manitoba the Explorer was pining away at Fort la Reine on

(1) Margry, vol. 6, p. 591.

(2) La Vérendrye's Journal, 1738-9, Rep. Can. Arch. 1889, p. 13.

account of the difficulties that beset him through the neglect of his outfitters.

On May 27th, 1739, he had sent his furs to the Grand Portage, and expected that the same canoes that carried them would bring back the merchandise that he actually needed for trade and to support him among the Indians. The canoes should have received at that point the supplies that the outfitters of La Vérendrye's expedition had promised to send him. His men waited for 18 days at the Grand Portage hoping from day to day to see the merchandise arrive. Their only food was tripe. Seeing no canoes coming, they continued their journey to Michillimakinac. On arrival there they were confronted with an order of the Intendant, at the requisition of La Vérendrye's outfitters, authorizing the seizure of goods to the value of 4,000 pounds. Contrary to their promises, the Montreal merchants had forwarded no merchandise to restock the trading posts. La Vérendrye's messengers, in this terrible plight, applied to the governor of Michillimakinac, dwelling on the extreme danger incurred by their fellow voyageurs in the wilderness of the west if they did not receive help.

The commandant of the fort managed to let them have, at exorbitant prices, a small quantity of supplies, and with this they set out to return.

On October 20th they reached Fort St. Charles, in 3 canoes, with scarcely any supplies, but a large number of men.

La Vérendrye found himself in the fall of 1739, reduced to a stock of a few bales of goods, lacking a host of necessities, and loaded with a debt of 40,000 pounds. The season was then too far advance to permit of his going to Montreal that year. He was accordingly forced to wait till the following spring, in painfully straitened circumstances.

These financial difficulties checked his exploration, forcing him to retreat when he had prepared for a grant forward movement. In the spring of 1740 he placed the command of Fort la Reine in the hands of the Chevalier directing him to go in the fall to the country of the Mandanes, with two Frenchmen, probably the same men who had been left the preceding winter in that country, and provide the proper guides to be taken to the western sea. After settling the particulars of the expedition, he left for

Montreal. As the Chevalier was short of almost everything, his father forwarded him from Michillimakinac the most indispensable articles for his journey. This he did on July 16th, 1740, the day he arrived at Michillimakinac.

By so doing he wished to open the way for his own expedition across the prairie country at the same time as another of his sons made the voyage up the Saskatchewan.

On August 25th he reached Montreal. He had barely arrived when he was notified that he was involved in a lawsuit concerning the trading posts he had established. "I, who hate lawsuits," he says, "never having had one in my life, I compromised at great personal loss, although I was far from being in the wrong" (1).

This lawsuit settled, he proceeded to Québec where he was the guest of Governor Beauharnois for the whole winter. The governor was always his faithful friend and ordered him to continue his exploration.

By an agreement of November 12th, 1740, between M. Nolant de la Marque and M. Gamelin, his partner, and La Vérendrye, the latter undertook to deliver 75 packages of beaver skins, in settlement of certain claims. No doubt this is the lawsuit to which La Vérendrye makes reference, as being settled. (2)

All who took any interest in Canada, in the greatness and expansion of the colony on commercial lines, favored the enterprise and did La Vérendrye justice. It was not thus at the French Court. A clique of self seekers, envious courtiers, was formed to oppose these plans for exploring the country, and had involved in the scheme, M. de Maurepas, minister of marine.

Bigot, who was soon to acquire such sorry fame in Canada, was the moving spirit of the intrigue. These people found fault with the undertaking, made little of La Vérendrye's achievements, and accused him of seeking only to make money out of the fur trade. De Maurepas regretted having granted La Vérendrye the privilege of carrying on the trade, and refused to help him. (3)

La Vérendrye was aware of the facts of the situation. His answer to all their accusations was "If to bear the burden of a

(1) Margry, vol. 6, pp. 590-593.

(2) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, pp. 31 and 32.

(3) Rochemonteix, *The Jesuits and New France*, vol. 1, p. 226.

debt of 40,000 pounds is any advantage, I can certainly swear I am a very wealthy man and I would have become still more so if I had continued in the same way. I am misunderstood. I have never had the desire to pursue wealth. *I have sacrificed myself and my children for the service of His Majesty and the welfare of the colony.* Perhaps at some future date they will realize the advantages that will accrue from what has been accomplished. Is it not worth considering the large number of men who make their living out of the fur trade, the slaves that are brought into the country, and the furs that formerly went to enrich the English but are now enriching us? Throughout all my misfortunes, I have the consolation of knowing that M. le Général, (the governor,) can appreciate my motives, recognizes the uprightness of my intentions, and still does me justice, in spite of the opposition shown to me. (1)

La Vérendrye succeeded once more in bringing his creditors to their senses and procured some more supplies. In order the better to control the profits of the fur trade, they sent along with La Vérendrye, a number of clerks for the sole purpose of representing them and looking after their interests. The Explorer made good use of this visit to Quebec to induce the superior of the Jesuits to send another missionary.

While at Michillimakinac he had met Father du Jaunay who was quite eager to go to the Mandanes. He wrote to his superior, requesting as a favor, to be allowed to follow La Vérendrye. Father du Jaunay's request was not granted.

Father Coquart, the latest arrival in the country, had the preference. They did not wish to take away from a mission a priest who understood the language of the natives of the vicinity. Moreover, they thought that a young priest would learn the languages more easily than an older man who might expect to find rules and idioms similar to those in the language he was used to.

On June 26th, 1741, Father Coquart left Montreal with La Vérendrye. A bitter trial overtook him at Michillimakinac. By means of certain intrigues La Vérendrye was ordered to leave Father Coquart at that fort. What was the nature of these in-

(1) Margry, p. 593.

trigues? True, the Marquis de Beauharnois was La Vérendrye's faithful friend but the same could not be said of numerous other officials and possibly his creditors, as well. It is to be assumed that they had recourse at this time to the calumnies so often hurled at the Jesuits and as often refuted. They accused these zealous priests of spending too much time over beaver dams and taking too much interest in the fur trade. Besides, a haunting jealousy pursued the Explorer, and made excuses on the plea of expense, to oppose the departure of Father Coquart. Persecuted in this way, La Vérendrye was compelled for the time to submit to their petty tyranny and, to his great regret, to leave Father Coquart at Fort Michillimakinac. La Vérendrye had been detained long enough at that point, for it was not till October 13th, 1741, that he reached Fort la Reine. His son Pierre Gauthier had returned from the Mandanes country, where he had been unable to secure guides.

During La Vérendrye's absence, his sons had visited Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Dauphin. "I had also given orders," he says, "to build Fort Bourbon, at the foot of Lake Nepigon, (Winnipegosis), at the mouth of the big river Poskoyac." He at once sent his son, Pierre Gauthier, to build Fort Dauphin. Fort Dauphin, which was started in the fall of 1741 by Pierre Gauthier de La Vérendrye, on the northwest shore of Lake Dauphin, was located on the southeast quarter of section 27, township 27, range 18, about one mile or two from the mouth of Valley River, less than 100 yards from the shore of Lake Dauphin. Traces are still to be found there of cellars, though these pits are covered with brush. The route followed by the Chevalier de La Vérendrye was through Lake Manitoba, and Winnipegosis, thence to Lake Dauphin through Mossy River. Fort Bourbon had also been begun by La Vérendrye's sons during his absence in 1740-41, at the mouth of Red Deer River, but on Lake Winnipegosis, on Dawson Bay.

On April 29th, 1742, La Vérendrye sent two of his sons to the country of the Mandanes, to explore it and go as far as the country of the "Gens des Chevaux," (horsemen.) He would receive no news of them for 15 months. La Vérendrye tells us that one of his sons who made that journey was the eldest, the Chevalier,

who wrote the record of the trip. Who was the other? It is probable that it was the youngest, Louis-Joseph, because that boy had been sent in 1734-35 to study with the special object of learning to draw maps showing exactly the lay of the country to be explored.

The Indians of all the posts formed a united body to make war upon the Sioux. The Explorer tried in vain to pacify them. The Sioux, warned in time, gathered in great numbers and waited calmly for their enemies. They inflicted upon them a bloody defeat and drove them back north.

La Vérendrye, meantime, was obliged to guard Fort la Reine, to direct his trading. His sons being away, he could not go away himself. He tried to secure as many furs as he could to satisfy, to some extent, his creditors, and awaited the news which his sons would bring on their return.

VOYAGE OF CHEVALIER DE LA VERENDRYE AND HIS BROTHER TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.—FROM APRIL 29th 1742 TO JULY 2nd 1743.

On April 29th, 1742, the two sons of La Vérendrye left Fort la Reine, their only companions being two Frenchmen, Louis La Londette and A. Miotte, to undertake one of the most famous journeys of that period. They reached the Mandanes on May 19th and stayed with them till July 23rd, waiting for the Gens des Chevaux who were to guide them to the west. As these did not show up, they took two guides from the Mandanes and set out on their long journey.

They travelled 20 days west-south-west. They never met a human being but saw game in plenty. They noticed in various places that the soil was of different colors, such as azure, vermillion, green, shining black, white like chalk, and ochre.

On August 11th they reached the mountain where lived the "Gens des Chevaux." But they found that the men had gone to war. Their guides refused to go any farther. They built themselves a hut for shelter till the "Gens des Chevaux" should return. The Mandanes, who had only been persuaded by earnest entreat-

ies and presents, to go that far, abandoned them there. The Frenchmen lighted fires in various places to give notice of their presence, and to attract people to them, being quite resolved to trust themselves to the first nation that came along.

On the 10th of September but one of the Mandanes remained with them. Notwithstanding these depressing circumstances, they decided to continue on their travels. On September 14th, their lookout discovered smoke south-south-west. The Chevalier sent one Frenchman with the Mandane guide to investigate and they found a village of the tribe of "Beaux-Hommes," who received them well. They made the Indians understand, by signs, that there were three Frenchmen a short distance away. The next day the chief went in search of the Chevalier, who arrived in their village on September 18th. Here the last Mandane guide refused to go any farther. He was afraid of enemies of his tribe. The Chevalier, after paying him handsomely for his services, provided him with the necessaries for his journey home. They remained 21 days with the "Beaux-hommes" and asked them for guides. The Chevalier had a happy faculty of learning languages with ease, for he says he had begun already to understand them.

They left the "Beaux-Hommes" on November 9th. Their guides took them south-south-west.

On November 11th, they came to a village of the "Petits Renards," who gave evidence of great pleasure at seeing them. On the 13th of November they came to another village of the same tribe and on the 15th of November their guides took them to a village of the Poyas. They continued their journey south-south-west. On November 19th, they found, at last, the "Gens des Chevaux." These Indians were plunged in grief. They had been nearly all killed by the "Gens du Serpent," a fierce nation dreaded by all the other tribes. Seventeen of their villages were in ruins. Their enemies had taken the women away to sell them for horses on the Pacific coast. In these circumstances they were not in the best of humor to go with the son of La Vérendrye. They declared moreover that no member of their tribe had ever gone as far as the sea, because the way was blocked by the Snake Indians. This Snake tribe had the reputation of being very brave. They were not satisfied when campaigning, with the destruction of one vil-

lage. They kept up the warfare from spring to autumn, and as they were very numerous, they terrorized almost all the other tribes. The sons of La Vérendrye, though disappointed in their plans, would not abandon their project. The Chevalier induced the whole village, by means of presents, to march with him to the "Gens de l'Arc," or Bow Indians, the only tribe that was not afraid of the Snakes. Owing to the wisdom and good leadership of their chief, the Bow Indians were even feared by their enemies. As the Bow Indians were on friendly terms with those that held the road to the sea, the Chevalier hoped to acquire valuable information from them.

On November 18th after travelling south-west, they were received by Indians of the "Belle Rivière," who took them, still travelling southwest, to the great Bow Tribe, on November 21st. All the natives of these parts had horses, asses and mules.

The chief of the Bow Indians was a man of distinguished bearing and most engaging manner, who took excellent care of the Frenchmen: "I was attracted to this chief," says the Chevalier, "for he was worthy of our friendship." In a short time I learned enough of the language to be understood and to understand what he said to me.

He asked the chief if he knew the white men who lived by the sea, and could lead them there.

"We know them," replied the chief, "by the accounts we hear of them from the Snake Indians, whom we will meet soon."

The chief spoke some words used by the white men at the coast, and the Chevalier recognized them as Spanish. What convinced him thoroughly was the account that he received of the massacre of the Spaniards who had sought to discover the Missouri river's origin.

The warriors of this tribe were gathering from all the villages, to wage war on the Snake Indians, along the Rocky Mountains. At their request the Frenchmen decided to go along too. They proceeded south-south-west, sometimes north-west and the number of warriors increased day by day till they were almost 2,000 exclusive of women and children.

On January 1st, 1743, they got their first glimpse of the Rocky Mountains. They gazed with rapture upon the snow cover-

ed summits and the sharp peaks of these immense rocks piercing the clouds and boldly lifting their icy heads into the sky.

On January 13th, they came to the first of the foothills and began to climb. They were eager to surmount these menacing barriers and set foot at last upon the long-sought and ever-dreamed of shores of the western sea. But an insurmountable obstacle arose and forced them, like modern Moses, to relinquish to others the glory of entering the land of promise. The largest village of the Snake Indians, lay upon the first slopes of the mountains.

The scouts of the Bow Indians that had been sent forward, reported that the village was deserted, and that the enemy warned of their approach, had fled. Then a regular panic broke out. The Bow Indians, though 2,000 strong, and urged by their chief to pursue the Snakes, even into the mountain fastnesses, refused to attempt such an undertaking, fearing that the Snakes had gone to the Bow villages and massacred all the women and children. Deserted by the Indians, in the depth of winter, and confronted by a cruel foe constantly on the alert, they were obliged to retrace their steps.

"I was extremely mortified," says the Chevalier de La Vérendrye, "at not being able to make the ascent of those mountains as I had planned. The prairies through which we are passing," he adds, "are bare and dry." They continued to retreat in disorder. They crossed great stretches of prairie swarming with wild animals. They spent each night singing and shouting and continually begged of the Frenchmen to join them in the war. Throughout the campaign the Chevalier never consented to take part in the war. He always advised them to make peace.

On February 9th, they had returned to the Bow village, travelling south-south-east, till March 1st. The Chevalier sent a Frenchman, with one of the Indians, to the Little Cherry tribe located not far from their line of march. These were six days absent, and brought back a friendly greeting from the tribe. When the time for parting with chief of the Bow Indians came, the latter evinced sincere sorrow. In fact, the Chevalier is lavish in his praise of this chief, his kindness and unfailing goodwill toward the Frenchmen, for whom he evidently had a sincere liking. La Vérendrye secured a promise that they would come

in the spring to meet him at a little river that he indicated. The chief consented to build a fort there and sow grain, so as to receive them properly.

On March 15th, the French reached the Little Cheries. They had just returned from their winter quarters, and were met two days journey from their fort which was located on the Missouri. They reached the fort on March 19th and were warmly welcomed.

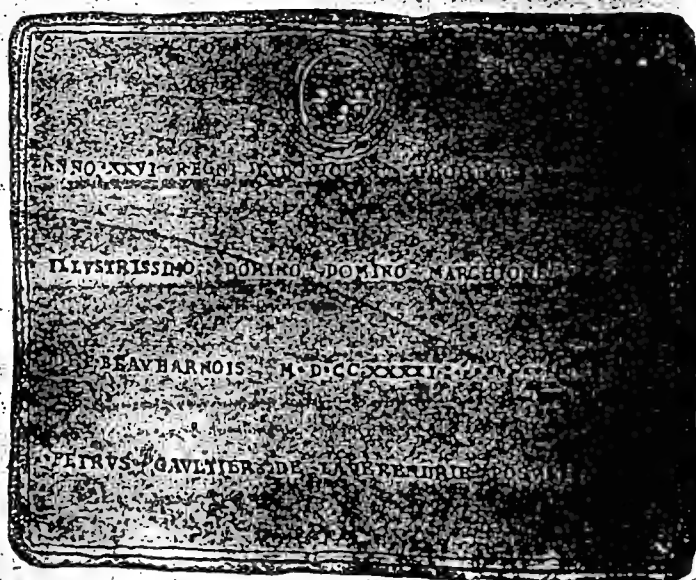
"I began to acquire their language," says the Chevalier, and it was not very hard. There was one among them who had spent some time with the Spaniards and spoke the language like his own. He had been baptized and remembered his prayers. He told the Chevalier that it took 20 days on horseback to reach the Spaniards, and that the latter did a big business in furs and slaves, which they exchanged for horses and goods, but would not give the Indians any firearms or powder. He told the Chevalier and his party that about three days' journey from there, a Frenchman had been settled for several years. Young La Verendrye would have liked to go visit him but his horses were not in fit condition for the trip. He was obliged to content himself with writing to him, asking him to come to the fort, or, if he could not come, to at least send him some news and how he was faring. He wrote that he would wait till the end of March. There is no sign that this Frenchman ever gave La Verendrye any answer. It is possible that he never got the letter that was sent. Who was this Frenchman, and where did he come from? We know that Juchereau de Saint Denis, following the trail of Nicolas Perrot, got as far as the Missouri at the head of 7 or 8 bands of Canadians numbering in all about 110 men. It may have been one of these that had reached that part of the upper Missouri.

The Chevalier placed a memorial on a height close to the fort. It was in the form of a lead plate with the arms and inscription of the King of France. He also raised a mound of stones for the governor. He buried the plate in the ground as a token of taking possession of the country in the name of the King of France, his sovereign. There it remained till Sunday, February 16th, 1913. On that date a number of children from Pierre, South Dakota, were playing on a hill close to the hospital of the city, when one of them, Hattie Foster, saw, sticking out of the

ground, the edge of a piece of lead. She easily removed the piece, found that it had letters inscribed on it. George O'Reilly, one of the boys near her, claimed he was the first to lay hands on the plate.

However that may be, there is no doubt that we have, in that plate, the identical memorial buried by Chevalier La Vérendrye, between March 19th, 1743, his arrival at that fort, and April 2nd, the date of his departure, from the fort of the Petit Cerise, (Pierre, South Dakota.)

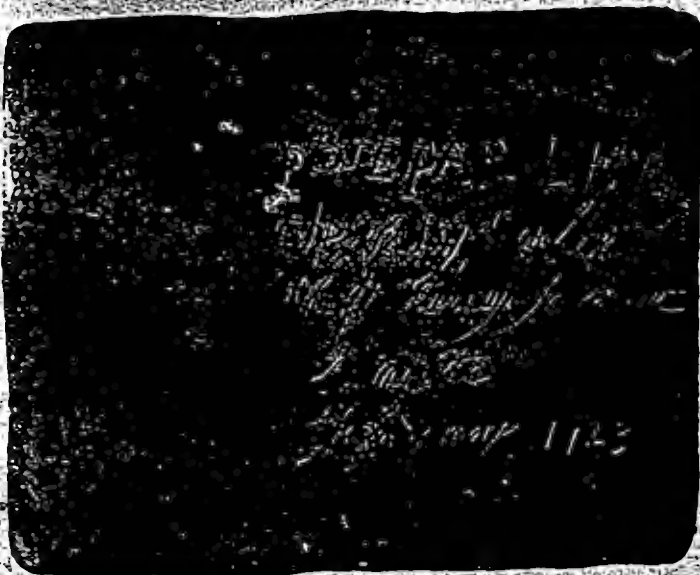
The plate is about 8 inches wide. On one side, at the top, are the arms of the king, and at the four corners, fleurs de lys, and the following inscription :



TRANSLATION : "In the 26th year of the reign of Louis XV. In the name of the king, our most illustrious sovereign, Governor the Marquis of Beauharnois : MDCCXXXI, Peter Gaultier de La Vérendrye placed (this plate)."

This plate bears the date 1741. There is little doubt that the inscription was stamped upon it at Quebec in that year and that the Explorer carried it with him when he left Montreal on June 26th, 1741, and entrusted it to his son when leaving Fort la Reine for his voyage to the western sea. The inscription was struck into the lead by a cold die.

It is different with the inscription on the back of the plate, which was probably scratched there with the point of a knife.



Which is to say "Posé par le Chevaly et de Lar.
"to. St. Louy La Londette,
"A. Miotte, Le 30 de Mars, 1743."

We are of the opinion that the letters "to" are an abbreviation for "témoin", witnesses. It is a mistake for certain writers to inquire why the name of the Chevalier appears and that of his brother does not. Such an oversight is incredible especially when

the Chevalier is careful to write the names of the two Frenchmen who were with him. The inscription states formally "Posé par le Chevaly et de Lar." The Chevalier shortened the words and the names as much as possible as he had no proper tools.

The word "Chevaly" stands for himself, the Chevalier, chief of the expedition, and obliged, for the time, to act as engraver, "et de Lar," stands for his brother, de La Verendrye, probably Louis-Joseph.

The plate was buried in the ground on March 30, 1743, that is, two days before they left "Pierre." The Chevalier would have liked to take the latitude of that place, but his astrolabe was not in good order since their departure.

The Little Cherry Indians were at war with the Mandanes, but, being assured that in company of the Frenchmen, they would not be molested, guides were furnished, and, with three of them, they set out on horseback on April 1st, 1743. The tribe was very sorry to see them go.

On April 9th, they came to a village of 25 huts of a tribe called the Flèche Collée, otherwise called the Prairie Sioux. They were well received but deemed it prudent to remain at some distance. The Indians did not visit them often.

The next day they continued their journey, keeping north-north-east and north-west, till they reached the Mandanes on May 18th.

They intended to stay 15 or 20 days with the Mandanes, to allow their horses to recuperate, but on May 25th, they heard that a number of Assiniboines were leaving Fort la Butte for Fort la Reine. Hastening therefore to that fort, they found that the Assiniboines had just left. That was early in the morning of May 27th. They found two Mandanes willing to accompany them, and it took but a short time to come up with the Assiniboine, who were about 100 strong. They all went on together. It would indeed have been foolhardy to venture across the prairies unless under strong escort, as is clearly shown by the account given by the Chevalier of the trip from Fort la Butte to Fort la Reine: "On May 31st, our scouts discovered a party of 30 Sioux in an ambuscade on our route. We attacked them with our whole force. They were greatly surprised to see such a large party and retreated

in good order, turning from time to time to face those that came too close to them. They knew well with whom they had to deal, as they looked upon the Assiniboines as cowards. They no sooner saw us on horseback and knew us for Frenchmen, than they fled in haste, never looking back. We had none killed but several wounded. We do not know how many they lost except one whom we found in our ranks."

On June 2nd, they reached the Assiniboine village, close to a mountain. As their horses were tired, they rested at the village till June 20th. Then they took guides and set out for Fort la Reine, which they reached on July 2nd, 1743, and were received with the utmost joy by the Explorer who had felt the greatest anxiety on their account. (1)

This expedition so beset with perils, through the vast plains of the west, is a lasting testimonial to the unflinching courage, the powers of endurance, and the ingenious resource of La Vérendrye's sons.

Brave sons of La Vérendrye, Canadians are proud of you! You have crowned our proud race with the immortal glory of discoverers of our vast territories, and by your gigantic deeds, you compel the admiration of all who read of your wonderful exploration to the very foothills of the Rocky Mountains, on which you planted the flag of France.

It is impossible, by means of modern maps to trace the route followed by the sons of La Vérendrye. We are left to surmise the details. We must remember, always, that the wandering tribes of the west lived a most unsettled life, rambling all the time, swayed sometimes by their taste for hunting, again by their warlike moods and a desire to carry out a night assault in a corner of the forest; so we have no means of fixing definitely the territory they inhabited. These tribes camped everywhere according to the caprice of the moment. The hunting grounds claimed by or allotted to them were very poorly defined and were modified from time to time by circumstances. To cite but one exemple of these migrations, there are the Black-Foot, who dwelt formerly on the North Saskatchewan, but are now on the border.

(1) Margry, vol. 8, p. 598 to 611.

The tribes that La Vérendrye visited could not help us any in identifying the countries through which he passed.

It is quite true that the old names of the rivers of the west were given by the Indians living on their banks. There is reason to believe therefore that the Bow River was thus named because the Bow Indians dwelt there, in huts built for the winter. The Snake Indians poured down out of the Rocky Mountains into the plain, spreading death and terror among the other tribes whose hands were ever raised against them.

But this is too slight a clue to enable us to pick up the trail of the La Vérendrye brothers.

From the fort of the Mandanes, (Barthold,) it seems they travelled south-west. Once among the Bow Indians, they travelled sometimes southwest and sometimes northwest, before they reached the village of the Snake Indians. When returning they marched from February 9th to March 1st, east-south-east. Then they found themselves 7 days' journey on horseback from Pierre, South Dakota. We have no trace of the direction they took for those seven days.

With such unreliable data, it would be rash indeed for us to attempt to define exactly the place at which they tried to scale the Rocky Mountains. - A number of writers suggest that it was at Big Horn, about 120 miles east of Yellow Stone National Park that they began to make the ascent. That is possibly true, but, to affirm it as an ascertained historical fact, would be indeed very rash.

FATHER CLAUDE GODEFROY COQUART, S.J., 1743-1744.

A few weeks after the return of La Vérendrye's sons to Fort la Reine, Rev. Father Coquart reached the same fort. This was the priest whom La Vérendrye had been compelled, very much against his will to leave at Fort Michillimakinac. Father Coquart had completed his vows at Michillimakinac, and had seen Father de la Morinie who, later on, was destined in his turn, to enter the west. The last entry in the register of Fort Michillimakinac, signed Father Coquart, is dated July 27th, 1743. It must have been very shortly after that date that he left for Fort la Reine.

This we learn from La Vérendrye himself, who in writing from this post to the Superior of the Jesuits, says: "Resuming the thread of my narrative, from which I have wandered simply out of vexation at the continual slanders put upon me, I left Montreal with Father Coquart who had been given to me as my missionary. During our unavoidable stay at Fort Michillimakinac, as a result of jealousy, Father Coquart was prevented from coming on with me, much to the regret of the whole party and of myself in particular. But through the urgent requests of our general, he is with us now, to the immense satisfaction of all here." The first lines of this quotation refer to what had occurred in 1741, but the end shows that Father Coquart was with the Explorer at the time he wrote these words, in 1743.

Several Indian tribes united to wage war upon the Sioux and drive them farther south. In vain La Vérendrye endeavored to dissuade them from such an undertaking. The Sioux were still victorious.

Father Coquart reached the west under these trying circumstances. The report brought in by La Vérendrye's sons who had just returned from the Rocky Mountains, increased the ardor of this pious missionary. He was desirous of setting out across the plains to preach the gospel to those thousands of pagans who had never seen a minister of God. However, he had to content himself with exercising his holy office among the Indians who came to Fort la Reine. If he went west, it was no farther than the Souris River and Lake Manitoba. "The prairies on fire," said the Assiniboines in their poetical style, meaning that war was rampant everywhere. Worse still, La Vérendrye had to go to Montreal that year to answer his accusers. This left the missionary alone among the Indians whose language he had scarcely begun to speak. Next spring Father Coquart made up his mind to go himself to Montreal to explain matters and get the necessary help to enable him to bring to a satisfactory issue the work of evangelization he had begun. He was, however, obliged, by the resignation of La Vérendrye, to leave the north-west for the time. He reached Michillimakinac before the 21st of July 1744, for we find his signature on that date in the register of the fort.

Father Coquart died at Chicoutimi on July 4th, 1765, and

was buried by Father de la Brosse. His remains were later transformed to the cemetery at Tadoussac. He was the first priest to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the mass on the banks of the Red River.

RETURN OF THE EXPLORER TO MONTREAL, IN THE
FALL OF 1743.—HIS NOBILITY OF CHARACTER
AND HIS INTEGRITY.

On his return to Montreal in the fall of 1743 the explorer was subjected to bitter sorrows and calumny of all sorts. Notwithstanding the fact that he was the senior lieutenant in Canada, he was refused any promotion. Envious spirits told M. de Maurepas that La Vérendrye's expeditions had been directed only toward the discovery of beaver. They styled his most necessary expenditures extravagance and his reports lies. They had so poisoned the mind of de Maurepas that he went so far as to accuse La Vérendrye of having, by his avaricious adventures, caused the death of both his son and Father Aulneau.

Nevertheless, instead of making himself richer, he had sacrificed his own property and labored under a debt of 40,000 livres.

This man, after having sacrificed his military career, his children and his property, having planted the flag of his fatherland on the first heights of the Rocky Mountains and from the Missouri to Saskatchewan, having so often endured the icy blast of our winters with no roof but the starry vault, having faced the myriad dangers of endless voyages, in frail skiffs, on the surface of immense bodies of water and in boiling rapids, daily exposed to the furious hatred and cruelty of the numerous barbarous tribes of Indians in the west — this man who was such a paragon of integrity, and self-sacrifice for love of his country, found himself, compelled to suffer, as the only reward of his long series of services, treatment undeserved, the reception that might be accorded a mere fur-trader, whose only aim was to get rich by any means, fair or foul. It embitters the heart to see such revolting injustice heaped upon him. We can but admire him the more according to the excess with which the character of La Vérendrye has been unjust-

ly misrepresented. At that epoch of our history, that closing period of French dominion so full of sadness, self-seeking men sought to stifle the voice of justice. An unwholesome atmosphere prevailed about the French Court, and it happened only too often that speculators, like vulture seeking their carrion profits, overruled the will of those in authority and governed the policy of Canada.

In the halls of wealthy castles, in scandalous dancing halls and drinking bouts where choice wines were consumed to excess, corrupt disreputable officials were only too easily successful in extorting from an easy going minister, orders that resulted in the ruin of distinguished officers who were left to starve in order that these bloodthirsty vampires might flourish. Let us draw a curtain over the shame of a fast decaying system. Speculators, devoid of all sense of decency sought to besmirch the fair name of the explorer and ruin his reputation by dragging them through the filthy red tape of ministerial ante rooms. For some years their success was only too great, but their influence was not to last. The several governors who held office in turn in Canada during the time when La Verendrye was devoting all his efforts to promoting discoveries in the west, took his part, and finally pleaded his cause with the result that they succeeded in having the truth brought out at the French Court.

TARDY JUSTICE.—PROMOTION.—HIS SICKNESS : HIS DEATH.

Finally, it came to be recognized that this man, by his admirable tact, his strength of character and mildness of manner, had won the respect and love of the Indians of Canada for the French. Homage was paid at last to the fertility of his resource, the reliability of his judgment, in the many extraordinary situations in which he was placed, in the western wilderness. It did indeed require a rare tact and a marvellous insight into human nature to preserve from day to day the best terms with various Indian tribes. Being naturally distrustful and suspicious, it required but a slight thing to stir their anger and inflame their

hatred against the white men. Swift to act and implacable in their thirst for revenge, the Indian requires to be handled with the utmost care and circumspection if one would retain his love and confidence. In these arts La Vérendrye was most proficient.

The Indians were shrewd and philosophical after their own fashion, and were not mistaken as to the true motives actuating La Vérendrye in his dealings with them. They knew that he really loved them and was ever trying to do them good. This short statement explains the secret of his wonderful control over them. This may also explain why officers of consummate ability and courage were compelled to evacuate Fort Beauharnois on account of the hostility of the Sioux, while La Vérendrye continued to build new forts and strengthened his positions in the west.

At the Court of France they had not the slightest inkling of the difficulties and delicate circumstances surrounding La Vérendrye. Besides, his outfitters, not content with suing him and shutting off his credit, kept agents in his forts, who hindered him at every move and often stopped him altogether, when, to their minds, he was making too rapid progress.

Consequently La Vérendrye found himself on the one hand the object of interference on the part of his outfitters whose greed of gain was insatiable, and on the other, of bitter reproaches from the court on account of his slow progress charged to loss of time spent in trading.

The enterprise was necessarily dependant upon the profits gained by trading, for that was the only resource he had by which to meet his expenses. In spite of all these drawbacks, he would have succeeded by his courage and determination, to discover the Pacific Ocean, had not death intervened too soon, and ended his activity. However, confronted by such painful obstacles, he sent in his resignation in 1743, and retired.

The governor then appointed de Noyelles to succeed him and carry on the work. Here, so to speak, the work of La Vérendrye actually ends. He was destined never again to set foot upon the prairie. The Marquis de Beauharnois wrote to France in his defence to prove that he had been wrongfully accused. His successor, the Count de la Galissonniere went back to France and again opened the eyes of the court, in 1749. In reparation of the

unjust treatment to which he had been subjected, the king granted La Vérendrye, on September 17th, 1749, the Cross of the Military Order of St. Louis, and promoted him to the rank of captain of marines. The Count de la Galissonnière chose him as captain of his guards.

At the same time, he was asked to take charge once more of the affairs of the North-West. Pleased with such proofs of esteem and confidence, La Vérendrye at once set to work.

It is a distinctive trait of the most noble minds to set aside their own interests, even the most lawful, when the welfare of their country is involved. La Vérendrye did not put a price upon his services as soon as he saw that he could once more be of service to his king. He planned to spend the winter at Fort Bourbon, (1749-51,) and in the year 1751 to explore the Saskatchewan river.

On September 17, 1749 he wrote: "I trust I shall be able to travel fast enough to be able to winter at Fort Bourbon, the last fort which I had built on the lower part of Rivière aux Biches. I shall consider myself fortunate after all the suffering, hardship and danger I have gone through in this long period of exploration, if I can at length establish my own disinterestedness, my ardent zeal and that of my children, for the glory of the king and the welfare of the colony."

He died December 5th, 1749, and his remains were laid in the church of Notre-Dame in Montreal.

The following is an extract from the parish register of the church of Notre-Dame, Montreal, for the year 1749:

"On December 7th, 1749, in the chapel of Ste. Anne of this church, the body of Pierre Gaultier, Esq., lord of La Vérendrye, chevalier of the military order of St. Louis, captain of a company of marine troops, aged about 64 years, who died on the 5th of the said month and year between 9 and 10 p.m. There were present Rev. Messrs. Clérimbart and Guay, priests who have signed:

" (Signed) CLÉRIMBERT, Ptre.

" " GUAY, Ptre.

" " DÉATS, Vic."

The name of La Vérendrye is spelled in different ways, some writers substituting an "a" for "e" in the second syllable of the name, writing it "La Vérandrye." We have adopted the spelling which is found on documents signed by himself.

Mr. B. Sulte in his most interesting notes on this hero, of which we have made use, gives fourteen different signatures of this name, thus : la Véandrie, la Verendrie, La Vérendrie, La Verenderie, Laverandrie, La Véanderie, La Veranderie, la Verranderie, la Veranderie, Laverandrie, la Verandrie, Laverandry, La Verendrye and De Laverandrye.

THE SONS OF LA VERENDRYE.—NAMES OF THE FORTS

The explorer's son, Chevalier Pierre Gauthier, returned to Fort la Reine in 1745, being sent there by M. de Noyelles, successor to his father. In 1748 he travelled a second time into the North-West and rebuilt Fort Maurepas, which the Indians had burned down and repaired Fort la Reine, which had fallen into decay. On this second voyage, he was accompanied by his young brother François. They built another fort about the year 1748, at the widening of the Saskatchewan river which forms Lake Bourbon, (Cedar.) They called it Bourbon because the first fort of that name had to be abandoned. The ruins of this second Fort Bourbon have been found. In the same year, (1748,) they established a post at the mouth of the Pasquia river, where it empties into the Saskatchewan. They gave it the name of "Le Pas." According to an old tradition among the earlier voyageurs of the west, this post was called Le Pas by the first French discoverers. We cannot but justly admire the filial piety of La Vérendrye's sons who wished thus to perpetuate the name of their mother's family, she being a daughter of the Sieur de l'Île du Pas.

It was also in the same year, that they built Fort Poskoyac, a little below the junction of the two branches of the Saskatchewan. (1) The Chevalier had, on orders from his father, gone to the junction, but we are not aware of the year. (2)

Chevalier de La Vérendrye has left us some most important

(1) Royal Society of Canada, (L. J. Burpee,) 1907, p. 307, 309, 312.

(2) Margry, p. 618.

information concerning the territory he covered in 1748. From Fort Dauphin he says, there was a road leading to Fort Bourbon, but it was not much good. That fort was the sixth established. The custom was in those days, in going from Fort Maurepas, to go to the first narrows of Lake Winnipeg at its northern end, where the route turned west and going from island to island, till the main land was reached, which was skirted to the mouth of Rivière aux Biches where the first Fort Bourbon had been built.

The distance from the first Fort Bourbon to the Saskatchewan was reckoned at 30 leagues. On the lower Saskatchewan there had been a fort which, for lack of supplies for the winter, had been abandoned. (1) The Chevalier had been along the Saskatchewan from Fort Bourbon (Cedar) lake and the branch. Is it not likely that he here refers to Fort Le Pas which was located on the lower part of the Saskatchewan already known.

He says that Fort Bourbon was the sixth of their establishments. In fact, they were Forts St. Pierre, St. Charles, Maurepas, la Reine, Dauphin and Bourbon. In 1749, the Chevalier and his brother returned to Montreal. After that date, the year in which their father died, none of the La Vérendrye's saw the west. All three surviving sons of La Vérendrye adopted military careers.

What became of them? Le Gardeur de Saint Pierre, who succeeded M. de Noyelles, refused absolutely to accept their services.

The Chevalier had returned from the west in 1745 only to go back again in 1748. Meanwhile, in 1745, he was sent by M. de Beauharnois to fight under the command of M. de Saint-Pierre, at Sarastreuve. On his return he was ordered to spend the winter on the same frontier under the same commander. On May 5th, 1746, he was sent to Acadia. He was present at the attack on Fort la Joie, Ile St. Jean, against the Indians. He returned to the Canadian mainland with the Hurons. In 1747 he is found under Chevalier de La Corne and Saint-Pierre, going to head off the advance of the Agniers who were making for Montreal to take some prisoners. After that, (in 1748,) he returned to the west.

(1) Margry, p. 617.

After his return we find him subsequently at Lorette, at Cedres, and Beausejour, where he was attached to the garrison. (1) The Chevalier spoke seven different Indian languages. He returned to France about 1761.

François was killed in the siege of Quebec, in September 1759.

Louis Joseph was twice married. His first wife, whom he married on November 7th, 1755, was Marie Amable Testard de Montigny, daughter of Jacques de Montigny. Of this marriage one daughter was born, and was baptized at Longue Pointe. His first wife died in 1758. On January 31st 1758 he took for his second wife Louise Antoine de Lépervanche. Here is a copy of the marriage certificate :

"Extract from the register of baptism, marriages and interments, in the parish of La-Prairie, under the title of the Nativity of Mary, La-Prairie county, district of Montreal, Province of Quebec, for the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight.

"In the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight, on the thirty-first day of January, after having published from the pulpit at the parish mass two days previous, to said date the bans of Joseph Golthier de Laverendrie, Esq., officer of troops, son of the late Pierre Golthier de Laverendrie, Esq., Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis, captain of troops, and of Dame Marie Anne Dandonno, his father and mother of the parish of Montreal, of the one part, and Louise Antoine de Lépervanche, daughter of the late Charles Francis Mesieres, Esq., Chevalier de Lépervanche, captain of troops, and of Dame Louise Susanne Noland, her father and mother, of the parish of La Prairie of La Magdeleine, of the other part, certificate of the same publication having been made at the said Montreal, being presented, signed by Deat, Ptre., and two publications having been dispensed with, also a dispensation having been granted for the third degree of affinity, signed by Montgolfier, V.G., and no other obstacle or opposition being found, I, the undersigned priest, rector of the said parish of La Prairie, have accepted their mutual consent word of mouth and have given them the nuptial

(1) Margry, p. 628 to 632.

"benediction according to the form prescribed by our holy mother church, in the presence of Messrs. St. Paul de Senneville, Chevalier Benoist, Chevalier de Céloron, officer, Madame Lady de Lépervanche, and M. Panet, who have, with the said husband and wife, signed this first day of February of the said year.

"LAVERENDRIE, Louise Antoine Lépervanche St. Paul
"veuve de Lépervanche

"BENOIST Panet

"C. Gr. Céloron

"Jacques Desligneris, Ptre."

"Which extract, we, the undersigned, certify to be in conformity with the original

"La Prairie, this 8th November, 1906.

"A. R. LAMARCHE, Ptre.,

"Cure."

(Seal of the parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, La Prairie, P. Q.)

His second wife was 25 years of age. Rev. Father G. Dugas has furnished us the following notes on the two daughters of the Explorer.

Of his marriage with Marie Anne Dandonneau Sieur de la Vérendrye had, besides his three sons, two daughters, Catherine and Marie Anne. Catherine married Hypolite Leber, in 1745, great grand nephew of Jeanne Leber, the celebrated recluse who died in odor of sanctity in 1714 at the Congregation de Notre Dame. Marie Anne, married, in 1743, Jean Leber, brother of Hypolite.

Of Hypolite's marriage there were born, in 1746, Jacques, and in 1748 Joseph; they were baptized at Montreal.

Of Jean's marriage, Jacques was born at Longueuil, baptized in 1744. If at the present time there be any descendants of this branch of the Leber family, they are direct descendants in the female line of Pierre Gaultier, Sieur de La Vérendrye, discoverer of the North West.

In the autumn of 1761 one hundred and twenty-one pas-

sengers belonging to the French Nobility in Canada embarked on the ship "L'Auguste," to return to France. This ship was overtaken by a frightful storm and on November 15 it was wrecked on the shore at Cape Breton, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. One hundred and fourteen of these perished in the wreck. Among them were Louis-Joseph Gauthier, son of the explorer, and his wife Antoinette Meziere or La Pervanche, Hypolite Leber de Senneville and his wife Marie-Anne Gauthier de La Verendrye, Jean Leber, Sieur de St. Paul and his wife, Catherine Gauthier.

La Corne de St. Luc escaped from this shipwreck and has given an account of the disaster. Full particulars of this event are found in a work by Rev. Daniel, S.S. (Notes of Rev. Geo. Dugas to the author.)

REMARKS.

One step further and my task is finished.

Need I say it? I would rather be silent. Yet truth has certain rights which history cannot ignore. Although in 1749 La Vérendrye was, apparently reinstated in public opinion, he nevertheless continued under a shadow of suspicion. His own disinterestedness was never fully acknowledged. When he was replaced by de Noyelles and Saint-Pierre, it was readily seen that the enterprise was not prospering, but rather suffering a retrogression under their management. As early as 1742 the French Court wanted to give him an assistant in the person of Lieut. Demuy and to replace one of La Vérendrye's sons, by an officer or cadet in order to train several officers to endure the life of the west. This scheme was not adhered to. (1) In 1749 it was decided to re-engage La Vérendrye because it was realized that he was the most capable man to carry on the exploration, and discovery of the Pacific Ocean. But La Vérendrye was warned that he would be watched and that he was suspected of being more prone to fur trading than to exploring. (2)

Let us read the letter written by the minister to Governor La Jonquière, May 4, 1749. "De la Galissonnière, in one of the let-

(1) *Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1, p. 31.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 26 to 38.

ters to which this is an answer has gone into considerable detail on the subject of what the Messrs. La Vérendrye have done; and though what he says cannot justify their conduct any too much, His Majesty is willing to approve the decision he has made to again entrust this enterprise to one of them; and if the father himself has not gone back to the trading posts, but wishes to go, it will be agreeable to His Majesty if you give him the necessary permission. But the King expressly commands you to maintain such a strict watch over their actions that they will be held from giving too much attention to trading but will be obliged to devote themselves seriously to the object of their mission. You will also require them to provide you each year with a report of their operations of which you will kindly send me a copy."

Alas! How the great ones of earth are exposed most frequently to deception! Truth has the utmost difficulty in penetrating the wall of flatterers that shuts them in.

Notwithstanding the sad and demoralized condition of the French Court under Louis XV, our indignation, in spite of these revolting insinuations, does not extend to the foot of the throne. It falls upon those vile calumniators who inspired the king and his ministres. For them we have the utmost contempt.

La Vérendrye died a poor man. All his property in the west had been lost and his sons found themselves obliged to sell part of their property in eastern Canada to pay off part of the debt he had incurred. After having been ruined in the service of their country, the sons of La Vérendrye suffered the same fate as their father. No one undertook to reward them nor to secure for them any advancement. (1)

Let us turn from this sad spectacle to listen for a while to a friendly writer and comforting friend who has frequently guided us in the course of this narrative.

(1) Margry, pp. 621, 626.

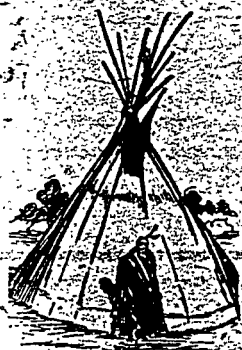
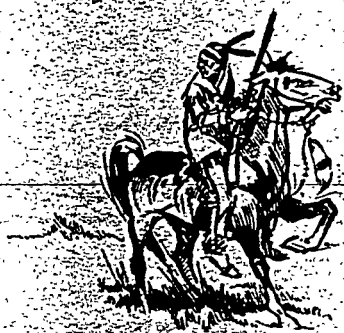
TESTIMONY OF MR. MARGRY.

We could find no fitter ending for these notes on the discoverer of the North-West and his sons, than the citation of the following lines, which contain a condensed eulogy of this noble family :

" If the explorers did not achieve complete success in the carrying out of their whole undertaking, their name will nevertheless, for the honor of France, be held in the greatest respect as that of the first discoverers of the west. The courage and perseverance they displayed, the hardship and privations they suffered, their life so laborious and sad, entirely devoted to their work, and their similarly unhappy ending, will stand as a remembrance of their enterprise, as one of the most interesting episodes in the most heartrending history of those discoveries during the course of which European civilization made progress against barbarism only at the cost of the lives of her noblest sons ; and this posthumous glory shed upon men whose lives were spent in misery through their devotion to their fatherland, will be but a poor and long delayed reward."

While awaiting the erection of a monument to perpetuate his deeds and as a token of the gratitude of our race to this illustrious patriot for the glory with which he has illumined it, we will lay these pages on his tomb with the affectionate homage of our admiration and remembrance.





APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

Extract from the Report on the discovery of Fort St. Charles, published in the *Bulletin of the Historical Society of St. Boniface*, vol. 1.

We have just given a succinct narrative of the more important points of the history of the discoveries of the North-West, which deal with Fort St. Charles and with the tragic death of Father Aulneau, of the son of La Vérendrye and of their 19 companions. It now remains for us to tell of the efforts made to discover their precious remains and the success which crowned the expedition of this year.

We must say at the outset, that the honor of this most gratifying discovery belongs first of all to His Grace Archbishop Langevin, who, with a patriotic zeal that distinguishes him, at the expense of great financial sacrifices, has organized numerous expeditions to search the ruins of Fort St. Charles. In spite of the heavy demands on his time by his episcopal duties, which allow him scarcely any leisure, His Grace has kept up this work since 1902, and to ensure its success, has founded a historical society, whose duties it is to gather all the documents which may throw any light upon this point in our history, so full of interest. It is but just to add that he has received generous assistance in the task by the Jesuits, the Oblates, several secular priests, and a number of laymen. The sons of Loyola could not fail to take an active part in these researches, for they concerned the recovery of the remains of one of their brethren in religion. Moreover, it must be noted that it was the Jesuits who first took the field. In 1890, a number of members of this order were spending their vacation at Rat Portage and in July, made up their minds to visit Massacre Island. The members of that expedition were Fathers Daniel Dono-

van, Joseph Brault, A. Couture. Ls. La Fortune, Joseph Blain and N. Quirk ; Capt. La Verdière was in command of the steamer that carried the party, but has since died. This captain was acquainted with the location of Massacre Island by tradition. M. Chatelain, a man of marked intelligence, who had died at the age of 92, had heard the same tradition from his own father who had also lived to a great age. Leaving in the morning, the excursionists reached the island about mid-day. The same night, very late, they returned to Rat Portage.

These priests had erected a cross upon one of the highest rocks of the island, with this inscription :

“ Rév. Père Aulneau, S.J.”

“ Massacré ici l'an 1736.”

(Rev. Father Aulneau, S.J. Massacred here in the year 1736.)

Monsignor Langevin had long desired to undertake an expedition to recover the remains of Father Aulneau and his companions. He was grieved that he had to give up from year to year, this cherished object, on account of his continual labors in the diocese. He had good reason to fear that the few living men who were in possession of the traditional knowledge, might disappear, carrying with them to the tomb all recollection of things of olden times. He had already taken advantage of the gathering of the Indians in 1897 and again in 1900, for the payment of their treaty money, to visit them and urge them to pay good attention to their missionaries, and to render them more favorably disposed toward Catholicism.

Also, in 1902, when he organized his first expedition, he set out his object to be attained as follows :

1st. The conversion of the Sautaux Indians of the Lake of the Woods, hoping that the blood shed by Father Aulneau might ultimately reach their hearts, until then, hardened against the faith.

2nd. The discovery of Fort St. Charles and the precious remains which it contained.

3rd. To rediscover the tumulus on Massacre Island, visited

in 1845 by Rev. M. Belcourt, where the bodies of the victims of June 5th, 1736, were temporarily buried.

On that expedition Massacre Island was visited. Guided by Powassin, head chief of the Sauteux, the explorers erected a cross on the north shore of Angle Bay, almost facing the site of Fort St. Charles.

It was quite an achievement to be able, in a first visit, to identify a locality so close to the fort. Before that date, all that was known on the subject, was that the fort had been located on the south-west shore of the lake, in a bay. That was a rather vague description for a lake whose shores were so indented with bays of all sizes. Without the Indian tradition, it would have been impossible, unless by a miracle, to institute researches on Angle Bay in preference to any other.

We have noted with the utmost care the evidence of Chief Powassin and another chief, not less distinguished, Andigomigawinini. The latter had his home right opposite the fort. Everything was carefully recorded in the archives of the society.

Among other items of information gathered, we will cite the following lines which have actually led us by the hand to the fort so long sought :

"On the south shore, almost opposite the spot," said Andigomigawinini, "where you have planted your cross, there are, in a little cove with reeds and poplar, three chimneys. The chimneys are not quite directly opposite the cross, but a little to the west." These last few words were finally to be our best clue which satisfied our pious longings.

In 1895, a second expedition explored Massacre Island: His Grace erected a chapel there, and committed it to the patronage of the Queen of Martyrs. At last, in 1907, a third expedition undertook to search the north shore of Angle River. Throughout the time covered by these three voyages, the Indians were consulted, distances verified, and new information regarding the bay was gathered. In the meantime, the members of the society studied the old documents, referring to La Vérendrye, and had copies made in Paris of the more important memoirs which have been most valuable to us, enabling us to bring this enterprise to a successful conclusion. Those who are more curious to learn the

details of these expeditions, we refer to the following numbers of *Les Cloches*, September 15th, 1902, September 15th, 1905, September 15th, 1907, and to the *Canadian Review* of September 1903. It is time we should at last give attention to the most important event of this year, and impart some of the details of major importance, of this consoling discovery which has filled all our hearts with joy.

It was agreed last year that the Jesuits who had representatives on each of the expeditions, would continue the researches this year. During the winter they built at the college of St. Boniface, a motor launch which they christened *La Vérendrye*.

On July 7th, Fathers Blain, Paquin, Napoléon Dugas, Dumesnil, and Paré, S.J., with Brother Bernard, left Kenora en route for Angle Bay. Father Napoléon Dugas is a brother of the rector of St. Boniface college, and attends to the Fort William missions. As he speaks the Sauteux dialect fluently he might have been of great assistance to the members of the expedition who relied upon meeting the Indians and obtaining new information. When they reached the bay, they found that the Indians were all gone fishing in the lake and would not return till later on in the season, when the mosquitoes would interfere less with their comfort. It must be confessed that these tiny insects which are to be found in myriads there, are a torment unending to the few travellers that visit those shores. After saluting the cross, the Jesuits decided to return to Kenora. They were not discouraged by this disappointment. To tell the truth, the rector had the faith which moves mountains, and had determined to attempt the impossible in his efforts to locate the ruins of the fort. Consequently on July 10th, a second expedition was organized, composed of Rev. Father Dugas, rector, Fathers Joseph Blain, Julien Paquin, Guido Leclair, John Fillion, Arthur Léveillé, Adéard Dugré, and Brothers Hermisdas Gervais and Ulric Paquin. The last two were accustomed to manual labor and gave earnest proofs of their unusual endurance. On July 10th, they pitched their tent on an open beach at American Point, so as to escape as far as possible, the persecutions of the mosquitoes. When building the encampment, Father Paquin hurt his foot. This very common accident was to lead to very important consequences. On the

morrow, the other fathers repaired to the north shore to continue the search begun in the preceding year, while Father Paquin was compelled to remain in camp on account of his injury. During their absence, he read over again the notes collected in the preceding voyages and by chance glanced at the passage mentioning the chimneys on the south shore. These lines impressed him as opening a trail that might lead to the discovery of Fort St. Charles. When his companions returned he acquainted them with the idea he had formed from what he had read. It was accordingly unanimously decided to start that very evening in the direction indicated by the reference to the chimneys. We might mention here that in 1902 the expedition of the explorers had landed on the south shore about a mile east of the fort. The search had been given up then because of the rocky nature of the shore that rendered it unlikely as a site for a fort, and also because the time at their disposal was rather limited. The fathers began to examine the south shore with care, and at a point about two miles from their camp they came upon a small cove, sheltered by a poplar grove such as described in the report. Moreover, they noticed that the bay was full of wild oats and reeds and that the shore at that point was hardly accessible by boat on account of the lack of water. There is no doubt whatever that in the time of the French discoverers, the beach extended considerably farther out into the bay. Everybody knows that the dikes raised at Kenora have raised the level of the water in the Lake of the Woods several feet. The fathers landed about half a mile east of the cove and forming a line with spaces of about five feet from one to another, started to work. They hoped by this means to inspect the whole extent of the ground of the locality and run less risk of missing the ruins of the old fort. Soon they reached a number of flat boulders. Here they decided to probe. They were just opposite the largest chimney of the fort. As they dug, they actually came upon the hearth stone of the chimney, some charcoal, wood and ashes, a carpenter's chisel, and some other articles. It was with feelings of great joy that they reported their discoveries to Father Paquin, whose sore foot had detained him still in camp. On July 13th, the explorers opened three trenches in an effort to locate the remains of the stakes of the fort. In the course of their operations

they collected more articles including knives, a pair of scissors, a shoe buckle and several nails. At a depth of two feet they found a large heap of bones. They dug all around the main chimney and found that its measurements on the outside were 9 feet by 7 feet. The hearth was covered with ashes. In order to facilitate the work of examining this interesting site, it was necessary to cut down about 60 trees. On July 14th, pits were sunk at intervals of five feet, with a view to discovering whether there were any skeletons or human bones in the place. In this process a second and third chimney were found. Rain interfered with the digging but on July 16th, they found evidences that the soil had been dug up before. Soon they discovered a piece of a stake, the wood of which crumbled at the touch. This was followed by the uncovering of other stakes close by. A piece of this piling which has been preserved, was six inches in diameter and was driven into the clay to a depth of two feet. By making several trenches east, west and south they were able to define the outlines of the fort by the continuous lines of stakes. In the spots at which piles had been driven it was easy to sink a stick, but along side it the soil was still hard and not easily penetrated. In short, after a great deal of work and groping the exact form of the fort was made out and new stakes were driven in the places where the French had driven theirs. They also established the fact that the piles had been in double rows, to use the words of La Vérendrye, in the sense that the outer piles were placed opposite the interstices between two inner ones.

The good fathers had not the time to continue their researches as many of them were obliged to return to their work at the college. They took with them most of the articles found and some of the bones to have them examined by doctors. On their return to the college they were informed by the medical men consulted that the bones were surely human.

Thus encouraged the rector of the college felt it to be imperative that the excavation should be continued till the precious treasure contained within the fort, so long and ardently sought for, should be revealed.

An exploration party was forthwith organized, headed by Father Paquin. It consisted of Rev. Fathers Paquin, Blain, A.

Beliveau, D.D., chancellor of the archdiocese, delegated by Monsignor Dugas, P.A., V.G., to represent His Grace Archbishop, Bernard Bisson, and Brothers Az. Gauthier and Hormisdas Gervais, and Judge I. A. Prud'homme, secretary of the *Historical Society* of St. Boniface. They left St. Boniface August 4th and arrived at Kenora about noon; they spent the rest of the day at

Aulneau Island, at the country house of the college of St. Boniface, where they completed their plans for the expedition. The next day, on board the motor-launch La Vérendrye, they proceeded to American Point, (42 miles from Kenora) where they set up their camp. The search began August 6th, and ended August 11th, in the evening. First they collected the bones found in the trench which had been dug north of the main chimney during the July expedition. Search was made to the east of where these bones were found when flat stones and ashes were found, the stones having the appearance of having been laid to cover a tomb. These stones were lifted and the ground underneath dug up carefully, but without results. Most likely these stones belonged to a fireplace intended to heat the chapel. It was then decided to investigate the eastern part of the fort, as the south-east had been dug up at every five feet. In this way it was proposed to examine the whole eastern part of the fort. A great many interesting relics were found but the shovels brought to light not another human bone. It was decided on Friday, August 7th, in the forenoon, to continue the search west, starting from the trench previously dug, in which the heap of bones had been found. These bones filled one bag and almost half of another. In the evening of that day we were rejoiced to disclose three skulls, only a few feet away from where the bones had lain. Here we close our narrative for the present, as the discoveries that followed were so important as to call for an official record.



R. F. BISSEON R. F. BLAIN BRO. GAUTHIER BRO. GERVAIS
JUDGE PRUD'HOMME R. F. BELIVEAU (now Archbishop of
St. Boniface) then Chancellor R. F. PAQUIN.



OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE DISCOVERIES MADE ON
AN EXPEDITION TO FORT ST. CHARLES
AUGUST, 6 TO 11, 1908.

BEFORE LEAVING FORT ST. CHARLES, THE DISCOVERERS BROUGHT
THERE THE CROSS ERECTED IN 1902 ON THE NORTH SHORE OF
ANGLE BAY AT THE SITE THEN BELIEVED TO BE THAT OF FORT
ST. CHARLES. IT BEARS THIS INSCRIPTION :

"FORT ST. CHARLES FOUNDED IN 1732, REDISCOVERED IN 1908."

We the undersigned, members of an expedition organized by
the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, to recover the remains of
Father Aulneau, Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye and their 19 com-
panions, murdered on Massacre Island in June 1736 and buried

on September 18th, in the same year in the chapel of Fort St. Charles; as is proven by historical records of the time, certify that the following account of the researches made by us at Fort St. Charles is true and in keeping with the facts :

1. On August 5th, we repaired to Fort St. Charles which had been rediscovered the month before, and we found a heap of bones in a trench that had been dug at the time of the expedition of the preceding month as we were duly informed, and we collected those bones to bring them to St. Boniface.

2. In the afternoon of August 7th, a few inches west of where these bones lay, we found three skulls.

3. On August 8th, trenches were dug around the skulls to get them out. We found also that the earth had been worked at that spot. — A poplar, 9 inches thick at the base, had grown up above the skulls, and a thin layer of reddish earth covered the skulls, lying north and south. At a depth of 18 inches we found 19 skulls arranged in rows of two deep. This array of skulls was three feet 7 inches in length, from north to south and one foot four inches wide. In the upper jaw of one of these skulls an arrow head is imbedded above the teeth. We have preserved this jaw in the same condition in which we found it. We have also found among the 19 skulls, two more arrow heads or parts of arrow heads, one being imbedded in the earth that filled the skull. We have planted a stake upon the spot, bearing this inscription : " 19 skulls."

4. The same day, at a distance of 8 feet west from the centre of these 19 skulls, we found a skeleton, whole, buried at a depth of two feet.

This skeleton we have marked No. 1, as being the first one found. The head was toward the north side of the fort and the body south of it. It lay along the west palisade of the fort, on its left side, the front toward the pile of 19 skulls. The skull was very close to the shoulder blade, so close that the jaw rested on the shoulder blade. Without the neck the skeleton measured four feet 6 inches. The body lay upon the clay, at a depth of one foot. We found three or four vertebrae in the shoulders. The skeleton was intact, and so were all the bones, except two ribs that might easily have been broken in the process of being exhumed. The

hands were placed one on each side of the head as though to hold it in place.

We found some finger joints on the head itself. A photo of this skeleton in its grave was taken by Father Blain, S.J. A cross was erected over it on August 11th.

5. On August 10th, we found skeleton No. 2, in a space 21 inches by 11 inches, at a depth of one foot. It was north-east of skeleton No. 1, and the distance from skeleton No. 1 and the skull of skeleton No. 2 was about 5 feet. A poplar 3 inches in circumference had grown up close to the skull of skeleton No. 2, and the roots had spread over the skull, and bones. On top of this heap of bones, two or three inches down, we found something that looked like burnt glass. It was easily seen that the ground about here, had been dug up. We proceeded



with this skeleton as with the others, by digging carefully around it removing the earth so as to expose it entirely. The bones had

REMNANTS OF STAKES ENCLOSING
FORT ST. CHARLES. THE LARGEST
PIECE WAS 21 INCHES LONG AND
HAD 6 INCHES DIAMETER.

been laid without order, the ribs being thrown in. The sacrum had been laid on top of the thigh bones, and the head lay to the north of them. The vertebrae were scattered. The head lying on top faced slightly south-east and was partly supported by the iliac bone. One forearm was stuck up obliquely. One shoulder blade, two upper arms and the finger joints were missing. The jaw was broken in several places.

6. On the same day we found skeleton No. 3, 18 inches deep and 8 feet north of skeleton No. 1. There was a thin layer of reddish vegetable mould on top of the bones. We found a small piece of enamel on the pelvis. This skeleton consisted only of the trunk as far as the hips. It lay on the abdomen. The skull was set upright on the neck at the north of the body, facing the body. The body from north to south, measured 18 inches and at its greatest width was 9 inches. The lower jaw was upside down. The bones were in their proper places. The bones were in an advanced state of decay and only one upper arm remained of the limbs. We saw the knee cap but it crumbled when touched.

On August 11th, we found, close together and lying on their backs, skeletons 4 and 5. They must have been placed in a sort of wooden box, of which some slight remains could be discerned, though entirely decayed. It measured four feet in length from north to south, and two feet wide, east to west. These skeletons had no heads. Their feet were to the south like those of all the others. Their position, as compared with the other skeletons was straight east from skeleton No. 3, and straight north from the skulls, two feet below the surface and lying on the clay. Skeleton No. 4 had longer and finer bones and skeleton No. 5, on the west, shorter and thicker. The small space in which these skeletons were found suggest they were buried in an advanced state of decay and mutilation. The spine and ribs were about the only bones in their proper places in skeleton No. 4, the others being more or less mixed up; for instance, the sacrum which had a deep cut as from some digging implement, lay near the shoulder blade; one thigh lay close to the feet with the hip joint. The skilled physicians who examined the skeletons presented a report which is to be found herewith. They found that one of the thigh bones did not belong to this skeleton. Some of the bones of the feet and hands were missing. The bones of skeleton No. 5 were in better order, but the bone of one forearm was under the spine, and across it. Here is a list of the articles found with these skeletons :

With No. 4, close to the feet, a key, a master-key and a glass bead. Between the skeletons near the feet, a large closed spring knife with a horn handle about six inches long and an awl point with a horn handle broken in two.

With skeleton No. 5, lying on the spine inside the breast, three small arrow heads that crumbled as soon as touched; at the feet, fourteen rosary beads under a piece of gilded glass one inch by an inch and a half; a few more scattered about the loins; four keys, a master-key, all in a good state of preservation, and a shoe buckle. We also found, when washing the bones at Aulnean Island, a half inch hook such as the Jesuits use to fasten their cassocks at the neck. This hook was entirely covered with rust and broke in two when handled and was at first taken for a small piece of bone. It is not known in what part of the skeleton it was found.

7. Trees had grown up at the heads of all the skeletons found. Where the 19 skulls and these five skeletons were found, it was easy to see that the soil had been dug up. It was easier to shovel in these places, and the different soils had been mixed. It was also noticed that nothing was found in the soil where the skeletons were dug up while in other parts of the fort, several articles were found at every turn.

8. If we take as a centre the spot where the 19 skulls were found we note the following measurements :

To skeleton No. 1, 8 feet west-north-west.

To skeleton No. 2, 8 feet and a half, north-west.

To skeleton No. 3, 15 feet north-north-west but slightly more to the west than for skeleton No. 2.

To skeletons Nos. 4 and 5, 15 feet north.

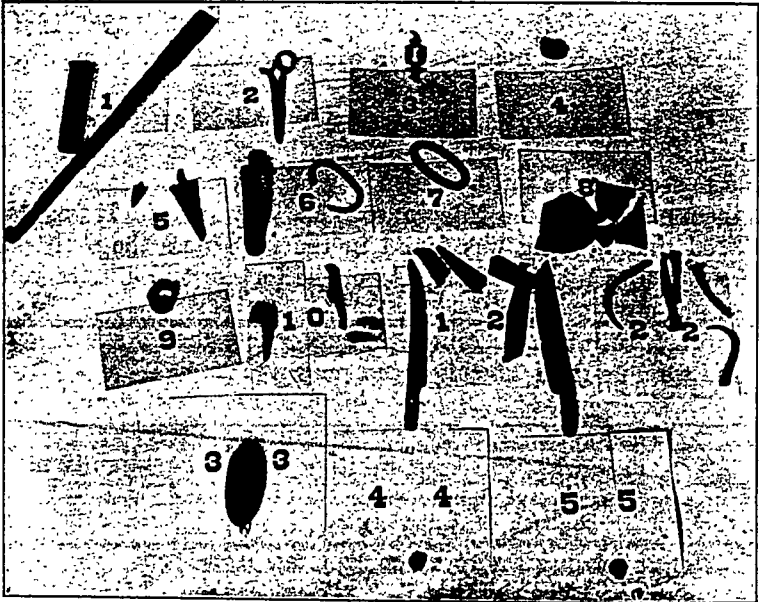
Before leaving the fort, the explorers transferred to the true site the cross previously erected on the north shore in 1902. The inscription on the cross was altered and reads as follows :

"Fort St. Charles, built in 1732 and found again in 1908."

They surrounded the base of the cross with a pyramid of rocks about four feet high. Then the *Magnificat* was chanted and the *De Profundis* recited. Stakes with appropriate inscriptions have been driven in at all the places where the skeletons skulls and bones were found.

OBJECTS FOUND.

IN THE RESEARCHES MADE AT FORT ST. CHARLES, LAKE OF THE WOODS, AT ONE FOOT OR LESS UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND, AND PRESERVED IN THE MUSEUM OF THE COLLEGE OF ST. BONIFACE.



SKETCH OF SOME OF THE OBJECTS FOUND.

1 carpenter's chisel; 2 pairs of scissors; 3 door latch; 4 pieces of Stone pipes; 5 arrow heads; 6 iron handles; 7 tinder box; 8 pieces of glass; 9 iron ring; 10 pieces of iron; 12 knife-blades; 22 nails; 33 whet-stone; 44 lead bullet; 55 pierced bead.

1. Remains of stakes made of fir, poplar or oak. These stakes formed the palissade of the fort.

2. A pair of steel scissors.

3. A mortise chisel used by carpenters.
4. A shoe buckle.
5. Two iron handles, one with a brass rivet.
6. Several knife blades.
7. A door latch.
8. Several pieces of glass and iron.
9. A tinder box.
10. A lead bullet.
11. An arrow head in one of the skulls.
12. Remains of the coffin which held the bodies of Father Aulneau, S.J., and J. B. La Vérendryé, eldest son of the Explorer.

The plan of the fort also all the drawings which accompany this work have been made by Rev. Father Blain, S.J.

We give herewith the certificate bearing the signatures of four eminent physicians :

St. Boniface, August 19th, 1908.

This is to certify that we have examined the skulls and other bones discovered at the site of Fort St. Charles, Lake of the Woods and are of the opinion that those marked :

"No. 1. Are those of a young man, not more than 18 years of age.

"No. 2. Are those of a large strongly built man about 50 years of age, and from facial angle, probably an Indian.

"No. 3. Are those of a child about 7 years of age.

"No. 4. Are those of a young man at least 20 years of age ; tall and probably slender.

"No. 5. Are those of a man of probably 30 years, strongly built, and of medium height.

" (Signed) GORDON BELL, M.D.C.M.

JAMES PULLAR, M.D.C.M.

G. A. DUBUC, M.D.

JAMES McKENTY, M.D.C.M."

In support of which we have signed :

A. BÉLIVEAU, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, now Archbishop of St. Boniface.

J. BLAIN, S.J.

J. PAQUIN, S.J.

L. A. PRUD'HOMME, County Judge.

BERNARD BISSON, S.J.

AZ. GAUTHIER, S.J.

HORMISDAS GERVAIS, S.J.

We will now draw a few conclusions from the preceding matter. Some are quite evident, while others may be only probable.

In the memoirs of La Vérendrye the length of the fort is stated to be 100 feet. If we start from the southern palissade which was its limit on that side, 100 feet will bring us within one or two feet of the shore, which at the time of the French occupation extended much farther north into the lake. The fort faced the lake. Its width (from east to west) was 60 feet. The piles were fastened firmly on both sides (along the west side only) by a double row of stones to a height of one and a half or two feet. The 19 skulls were found 44 feet north of the southern end of the fort, and 57 feet from the lake shore. The big double fireplace was used to heat all four corners of the building. Probably this was the lodging of the men and servants of La Vérendrye. The fireplace on the east must have been in the commandant's residence. That on the north was in the missionary's house. It was quite close to the chapel which was in the south. If we take into consideration the fact that from the place where the 19 skulls were found to that where skeletons 4 and 5 lay, it was 15 feet, we are led to believe that the length of the chapel lay in the same direction as that of the fort, that is from north to south. We may assume that it was 20 or 25 feet long and about 15 feet wide. If we placed the length of the chapel from east to west we would find it interferes with the side of the men's lodging and with access to the lake. By taking 20 feet off the 60 feet breadth of the fort, we would obstruct the exit of the men from their building.

The powder magazine would naturally be placed opposite and away from the chapel and missionary's residence and close to the northern gate of the fort near the lake. Another gate at the foot of the fort gave access to the neighboring forest where wood was secured.

Now we come to the great problem. Which of these five skeletons belonged to Father Aulneau and J. B. La Vérendrye, and is it quite certain that we have recovered their remains?

First of all, it is definitely assured, from the memoirs of La Vérendrye that their bodies and all the heads of the murdered Frenchmen were buried in the chapel.

Well, we have recovered the 19 heads. We are then absolutely sure that the place they were found in is included in the area of the chapel. In the immediate vicinity of these 19 heads we find five skeletons. These skeletons are therefore buried in the chapel. It now remains to decide which are the skeletons of Father Aulneau and the son of La Vérendrye.

Skeleton No. 1 has been examined by several doctors whose names are signed to the certificate above. All declare, after their examination of bones and teeth, that it could only be a young man of 18 years, not more. Well, Father Aulneau was born April 21st, 1705 and was consequently 31 years and a month and a half when he was murdered.

Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye, born September 5th, 1713, was 22 years and 9 months at his death. Now the doctors do not admit that these bones could belong to a person of that age.

Skeleton No. 2, according to the same testimony, was that of a man of 50 years and probably an Indian. Evidently there can be no question of its being either Father Aulneau's or La Vérendrye's.

Skeleton No. 3, by the same authority, is declared to be that of a child of 7 years.

There remain then but skeletons four and five. According to the professional men, skeleton No. 4 is that of a young man about 20 years of age, tall and probably slender. Skeleton No. 5 is that of a man about 30 years of age, of strong build and medium height.

Such are the depositions of the doctors, who eliminate skele-

tons Nos. 1, 2 and 3 as being in no possible manner the skeletons we are looking for, and are favorable to the other two. Well, one fact cannot be denied, that these two skeletons were buried in the chapel and that we dug up the whole of the ground about the 19 skulls which might have been within the chapel area.

We are forced to the conclusion that skeleton No. 4 is indeed that of Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye, and skeleton No. 5, that of Rev. Father Aulneau. That is not all. They had treated these two bodies with honor, for they were the only ones enclosed in any sort of box or coffin. Then we have the 14 beads of the rosary, a hook such as used to fasten the soutane worn by the Jesuits, some keys that might have belonged to a document box for reports or books which young La Vérendrye would be carrying with him to transmit them to the governor at Quebec and to the outfitters associated with his father. Father Aulneau would probably carry a box which he could lock, which held his chalice which this priest used in celebration of the sacrifice of the mass on his journeys. We know, in fact that this chalice was stolen by three young Sioux, that two of the thieves met sudden deaths some days later, and the mother of the third, fearing a similar fate for him, threw the chalice into a river. It follows then that Father Aulneau had a chalice with him when he was killed. It is quite natural to suppose too that he kept it in a box which he could lock, to ensure its safety.

We read that the body of La Vérendrye was found with a hoe driven into its back. In this detail the skeleton found carries an eloquent testimonial, for it has a deep cut in the sacrum. Some objection may be raised, perhaps because these two skeletons are headless. The answer, as far as La Vérendrye is concerned, is too plain. The body of La Vérendrye was found without the head. What became of it? It is probable enough that the Sioux carried it off as a war trophy.

As for Father Aulneau, the documents tell how he received a blow of an axe or tomahawk on the head and was afterwards decapitated. This is nothing surprising in the likelihood that the skull, exposed to the elements on Massacre Island for three months, and broken by the blow, was unrecognizable. It is possible that it is among the bones found in a heap.

Whatever the value of these suppositions, the reasons above given amply justify us in affirming that skeletons Nos. 4 and 5 are those of Jean-Baptiste La Vérendrye and Father Aulneau.

To whom then did skeletons Nos. 1, 2 and 3 belong? The testimony of the doctors leads us to believe that they were those of Indians buried there.

We know nothing of the history of skeletons Nos. 1, 2 and 3. With this open admission, we allow ourselves a few conjectures more or less probable.

Skeleton No. 2 has been set apart, but buried only one foot down. It would seem that this skeleton had been brought there after the flesh had become detached, after having been buried some place else. Might it not be the skeleton of some Indian chief who had been baptized and, after being killed in war had been brought to this chapel? As regards skeletons Nos. 1 and 3, they belong most likely to neophytes christened by Father Aulneau or Father MESAIGER, Crees who died at this time and would have been accorded Christian burial. If it is felt that our desire to explain skeletons Nos. 1, 2 and 3 leads us too far into the realms of speculation, we most willingly admit that we cannot complain. As for the heap of bones, although the contemporaneous documents throw no light upon that point, we doubt not that the piety of La Vérendrye and the love he bore his men, would have induced him to gather all that was to be found of them, at a later date than 1736. We need not try to reconstruct the skeletons of the 19 bodies since according to the documents, we know that only the greater parts of each skeleton were found. At the present time we know that we have in our possession 19 lower jaw bones and 12 sacrum bones (part of the pelvis,) that were found in the heap.

Before bringing this article already too lengthy, to a close, we desire to repeat that we have the certain knowledge of possessing, in skeleton Nos. 4 and 5, those of Father Aulneau and the son of La Vérendrye, which had been so long sought. The place in the chapel where they were found, the care with which they had been treated, the objects found in their coffin and the wound upon the sacrum bone of the younger man, all, in a word, unite to form a chain of evidence to prove the claim, which the doctors have corroborated.

It was with emotions that we could with the greatest difficulty control, that we have gathered these precious relics, which the Explorer, his heart wrung with anguish, had deposited in his fort, after having shed floods of tears.

We hope we shall have the satisfaction at some future date of contemplating, in the heart of the City of St. Boniface, a monument erected in honor of these men, "sans peur et sans reproche," who, for God and their country achieved the conquest of the Canadian North-West.

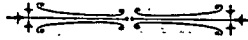
L. A. PRUD'HOMME,

Secretary of the "Historical Society" of St. Boniface.

NOTE.

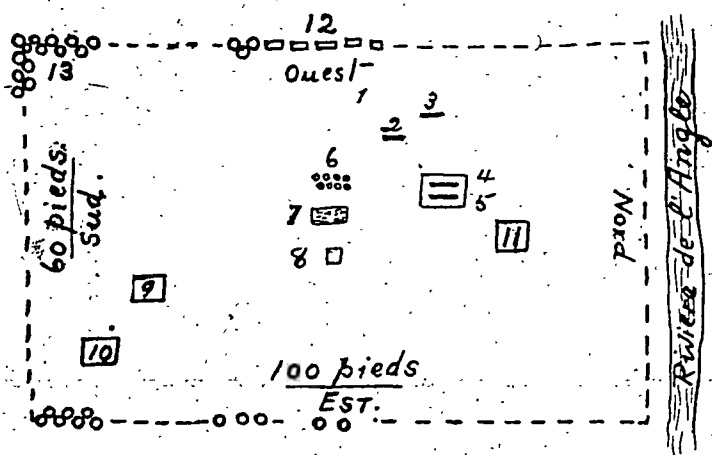
No confusion should be made between the associates or partners in trade of La Vérendrye and his outfitters. We have mentioned the names of some of his associates but those of his outfitters are unknown.

We are led to believe that his outfitters were greedy for profits; but it does not seem that the same reproach can be made to his associates.



PLAN OF FORT ST. CHARLES

(Reconstructed by Rev. Father Blain, S.J.)



The figures 1, 2 and 3, indicate the places and the order in which the first three skeletons were found.

Figures 4 and 5, where those two skeletons were found in the same coffin; (4) that of J. B. La Vérendrye; (5) that of Rev. Father Aulneau.

Figure 6, the 19 skulls.

Figure 7, bones to which probably the 19 skulls belonged.

Figure 8, a fireplace.

Figure 9, the first chimney place found.

Figure 10 and 11, other chimneys.

Figure 12, stones found in the basement, probably the foundation of the outside wall of the chapel.

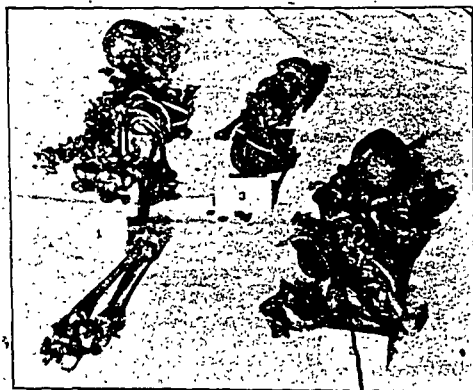
Figure 13, the small circles stand for the remains of the stakes that were found around the fort.

THE 19 SKULLS



The 19 skulls as found in the excavation after being cleaned.

THE 3 SKELETONS



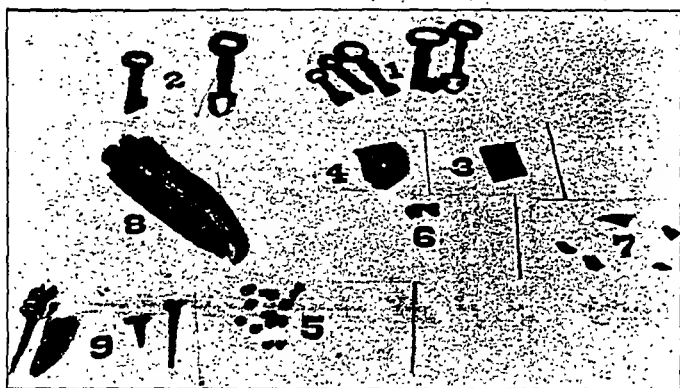
The three first skeletons unearthed as found in the trench.

SKELETONS OF J. BTE. LA
VERENDRYE
AND FATHER AULNEAU



Skeletons of J. Bte La Vérendrye (4)
and Father Aulneau (5)

OBJECTS FOUND IN THE COFFIN CONTAINING THE SKELETONS OF FATHER AULNEAU AND J. B. LA VERENDRYE



Figures 1, and 2, keys and master-key.

Figure 3, piece of gilded glass.

Figure 4, shoe buckle.

Figure 5, rosary beads.

Figure 6, hook (probably the hook of Father Aulneau's soutane.)

Figure 7, pieces of arrow heads.

Figure 8, blade of hunting knife.

Figure 9, awl and nails.

The objects 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, were rather on skeleton No. 5, Father Aulneau's.



Upper jaw of one of the skulls in which an iron arrowhead was stuck.



Sacrum (bone of the loins) of J. B. La Verendrye showing the wound inflicted by the digging instrument, (hoe.)

APPENDIX II.

AU GRAND DECOUVREUR

Pierre Gaultier de Varennes,
Sieur de La Vérendrye.

*Songez-vous à ces temps où par l'épaisse brousse
Par les vierges forêts, les fouillis sans chemins
Quand s'embusquait dans l'ombre et glissait sur la mousse,
Le perfide Sioux, aux souples moccasins,
La Vérendrye, aux noms du Christ et de la France
S'avavançait cuirassé d'espérance
Et le cœur débordait d'héroïques desseins ?*

*Ses rames déchiraient le réseau des lianes
Balançant devant lui leurs odorants faisceaux.
Ses pieds s'ensanglantaient aux ronces des savanes ;
Les gouttes de sueur perlaient sur les roseaux ;
Et quand tombait la nuit, aux lueurs des étoiles
Il pliait et prenait pour oreillers des voiles
Et s'endormait au bruit monotone des eaux.*

*Aux premiers feux du jour recommençaient les marches
Les portages, l'élan des prestes avirons.
Ses canots défilaient sous l'ombrage des grches
Sous les longs bras des pins semés de liserons.
Aux haltes, pour bâtir les forts, ô rude tâche !
Dans le tronc des sapins il enfouait sa hache.
Pour équarrir les pieux peinaient ses bûcherons.*

*Des déboires amers, il but la plénitude
Jalouse par l'envie et laissé sans soutien.
En pleine barbarie, en pleine solitude
Les arcs empoisonnés, le tomahawk païen
Massacrèrent son fils et son missionnaire
Et ses soldats vaillants qu'il aimait comme un père.
Sous le regard de Dieu pleura le grand chrétien.*

Quand il eut de ses mains fermé de fraîches tombes
 Et pleuré le trépas cruel de son neveu,
 Sans ployer sous le poids des lourdes hécatombes,
 Fort de sa mission, de son espoir en Dieu
 Il reprit sur les lacs ses inlassables courses,
 Il sillonna les eaux et monta vers leurs sources,
 Il atteignit la plaine et son horizon bleu.

De la mer de verdure et des fleurs de prairie
 Emergent étonnés des troupeaux de bisons,
 Au nom du Christ, au nom de sa France chérie,
 Sur ces immensités et sur ces floraisons
 Il planta son drapeau, puis poussa sa conquête
 Aux pieds des monts géants dont le sublime faîte
 Etale au soleil d'or des blancheurs de toisons.

Après avoir conquis un empire à la France
 Sacrifié sa vie et ses hardis enfnts,
 Quand il eut épuisé la coupe de souffrance,
 Loin du pays foulé par ses pas triomphants
 Il s'en alla traîner sa vieillesse abattue.
 Son grand cœur est éteint, sa forte voix s'est tue,
 Il n'a pas vu la gloire et ses feux échauffants.

Illuminez le front dont la haine et l'envie
 Cherchèrent à ternir l'éclat immaculé.
 Consolerez la grande âme au malheur asservie,
 Faites battre le cœur de pleurs de sang gonflé.
 Afin que le héros nous prêche d'âge en âge,
 Le dévouement et le devoir inviolé.

Où paissaient les bisons, un océan immense
 De fragments d'or ondule au gré du vent berceur,
 Pour celui qui jeta la féconde semence
 Qui fraya le sentier évangélisteur,
 Donnez votre or, donnez votre modeste obole,
 Donnez pour la statue et la juste auréole
 Qu'attend le piédestal du vaillant Découvreur.

ARMAND CHOSSEGROS.

(Translation.)

TO THE GREAT DISCOVERER

Pierre Gaultier de Varennes,
Sieur de La Vérendrye.

Do you recall those days when La Vérendrye, in the name of Christ and of France, armed only with his high hope and endurance and with a heart overflowing with heroic desires, penetrated the virgin forest, where lay in wait the treacherous Sioux, hidden in the shade of the tangled undergrowth of pathless foliage, soft footed or crawling along the moss covered ground?

His ears tore through the tangled weeds which dangled before him their odorous branches; the wild bramble of the savanna caused his feet to bleed, and his sweat shone upon the reeds. At nightfall he folded his sails for pillows and under the light of the stars slept to the monotonous sounds of the waters.

With the first light of dawn he renewed his march, his portages, with the thrust of ready paddles. His canoes slid along under the shade of the arched mows of the far reaching fir branches tangled with bindweed. At each stop, to build his forts, such trying labor, he buried his axe in the pines and his woodcutters experienced the fatigues of squaring the timbers.

Of bitter disappointments he drank his fill. Envidious jealous enemies, he was often left without support. In the midst of the wilderness, in the loneliness of the prairie, exposed to poisoned arrows, and the tomahawk of the pagan which felled his son, his missionary, and his soldiers whom he loved as a father. Alone with God, wept this great Christian.

When he had with his own hands sealed their fresh graves, and wept for his nephew's sad death, undismayed by the weight of these heavy sacrifices, strong in his mission and in his faith in God, he took up once more his trail across the lakes which he could not relinquish. He braved the waters and sought out their sources, and reached the prairie with his blue horizon.

From the sea of verdure and flowers covering the prairie appeared herds of astonished buffalo. In the name of Christ and in

the name of his beloved France, he planted upon these flowery immensities, the flag he bore, and then pressed his conquest even to the gigantic mountains whose sublime peaks thrust upward fleecily to the golden sun.

Having conquered an empire for France at the sacrifice of his life and his brave sons, having reached the limit of endurance, he withdrew far from the scene of his triumphs to drag out his weak old age. His great heart is still, his vibrant voice is hushed; he never realized his glory and its glowing thrills.

Crown that brow whose spotless fame the tongues of hate and envy sought to tarnish. Comfort the great spirit doomed to unhappiness and revive the heart that was smothered with tears of blood; cast in bronze the vigorous countenance that our hero may from epoch to epoch serve as a reminder of devotion and duty inviolate.

Where the buffalo wandered grazing, an ocean of golden wheat undulates to the wanton breath of a soothing breeze; for him who sowed the seeds so prolific of evangelization, and broke the path, give of your gold, or your humble obolus, give for the statue and the just aureole that await the pedestal of the valiant Explorer.

ARMAND CHOSSEGROS.

HONOR THE HEROES.

*Joy to St. Boniface College
Upon its prodigious find
Increasing our national knowledge
And stirring both body and mind.
All honor from all our land
To the heroes who yielded their lives
Obeying their Master's command
In spite of the savages' knives.
May we with such blessings today
Remember the men of the past
And prove that we're worthy to play
A part in the land that will last.*

WILLIAM MURRAY.

APPENDIX III.

NOTES ON THE MAPS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE
NORTH-WEST.

1673. Pere Marquette's map:—On the north of Lake Tracy (Superior), we read:—"Route to the Assinipoulak, 120 leagues to the North-West," but there is no road indicated. (The Aborigines of Minnesota.—*Minnesota Historical Society*, 1911, p. 25.)

1683. Rev. Father Hennepin's map. This map shows a fort north of Nepigon Lake to intercept the Assenipoils going to Hudson Bay. The Lake of the Woods is called Lake of the Assenipoils.—*Idem*, p. 29.

1688. Map of Northern America drawn by J. B. Franquelin in 1688, to be presented to Louis XIV.

The Grossillers River is mentioned and the Pigeon River canoe route is called River of the Assenipouales, i.e. the route to the Stony Sioux on the Lake of the Woods.

Fort William is shown under the name Kamanistigouan, or Three Rivers.—*Idem*, p. 30.

1703. Guillaume de l'Isle's map, (geographer of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Paris.)

The Pigeon River is called River of the Assenipoils. The Kaministiguia is called Three Rivers. Groseliers River is a little creek west of the Assenipoils (Pigeon) River and near the head of the lake.—*Idem*, p. 35.

1730. Map drawn by the Indian Achagach and others. It shows the Pigeon River under the name of Montihavagane. This river flows through several lakes of which the first is Long Lake, nowadays Pigeon River Bay. The last lake bears the name Flat Lake. Above Flat Lake there is another lake which is the last of those which furnish water toward the east. The height of land is shown west of this lake.

Nord (North) and Pierre à Fusil (Flint) lakes empty into Lake Sesakinga (Saganaga.) To the west of this lake are two rivers both of which flow out of Lake Tecamamisouen, (Lake of the Woods.)

To the south east of this lake there is a deep bay into which

flow three rivers from the south east. The most westerly of these is fed by two creeks. The southern one is called, by the Sioux, Mississippi, where it rises, meaning that it is the route to the Sioux of the Mississippi. Perhaps these latter notes refer to the Warroad River and its ramifications with the Red River through Rivière aux Roseaux, (Reed River.)

Another road passes through the prairies in a North-western direction to the territory inhabited by the Assinipoils or Assinipoulaes, and starts from the south-west of the Lake of the Woods. To the west of Lake Winnipeg there are lines under the names "River of the West," and "Shining Stone Mountain," would seem to mean the Saskatchewan River and the Rocky Mountains.

The Crees or Christinots (Kilistino,) lived north of the Lake of the Woods and the Monsonis north of Rainy Lake.

This map was sent by La Vérendrye to the governor, de Beauharnois. It is reproduced in Volume I of the Geological Surveys of Minnesota, (1881,) p. 19.—Idem, p. 37.

1737. Map showing the new discoveries in Western Canada, seas, rivers, lakes, tribes inhabiting the country in 1737, coupled with a letter of M. de Beauharnois of October 14, 1737.

Two rivers lead to Lake Tecamaouen, (Rainy Lake); the north river is called Kamanistigouea, and the south is the Pigeon River, where the Grand Portage is. In the corner, south west of Rainy River, is Fort St. Pierre close to Fort Francis. Two rivers lead to Lake of the Woods, one to the south, which is Rainy River. Opposite the mouth of this river, far out in the Lake of the Woods, is Massacre Island. From the southern end of the Lake of the Woods two rivers and Savane portage, lead to Roseaux Lake, (Reed.) From this lake flows a river called La Fourche, leading to the Red River, which rises in Red Lake and empties into Lake Winnipeg, (Quinipigon,) which in turn empties into the sea of the north, (James' Bay.)

Lake Winnipeg receives also the waters of the Quinipigue, (Winnipeg,) which come from the south east, from the Lake of the Woods.

The Lake of the Prairies is indicated to the south of Lake Quinipigon; Lake Cristinaux is found to the south as also that of the Assenipoulacks.

The big river of the Couhatchatte nation, with the village at its mouth denote the Minnesota River and part of the Mississippi.

The map shows no islands in the Lake of the Woods except at the north. All the country to the west of the Lake of the Woods is drawn too much to the left. To put things in their proper places it is necessary to bring all that country about 90 degrees farther to the right. Thus the River Couchant (Setting Sun,) and the River Brochet should be shown flowing east instead of north, and would indicate the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers.

This map is difficult to interpret and in parts is not to be reconciled with the topography of the country as at present known.—Idem, p. 39.

1743. Map of North America to accompany the history of New France, drawn by N. Bellin, Royal Engineer and Hydrographer of the Navy, 1743. Lake Ouinipigon is shown as flowing into the Western River which crosses the Mountain of Shining Stones, with this note at the western end of the Western River: "Here, according to the reports of the Indians, high and low tide begin." The Assiniboels are shown as inhabiting the territory to the northwest of the Lake of the Woods.—Idem, p. 39.

1744. Bellin has also another map, drawn in 1744 from the journal of Charlevoix.

1744. Map of part of North America, prepared from information furnished by Joseph La France, a French halfbreed who travelled from Sault Ste. Marie to Fort Nelson between 1739 and 1742.

Lake Nepigon is shown under the name of Pique Lake.

The route from Lake Superior to Rainy Lake is scarcely marked. From Rainy Lake to Hudson Bay the road is shown.

There are two Winnipeg Lakes mentioned: one large and the other small connected by a river; then come Lakes Siens, Caribou, Pachegoia and the Nelson or Bourbon River.

From the west the Vieux Hommes River flows into Lake Pachegoia and the Red River into the big Lake Winnipeg. The Red extends up west as far as the Beaux Hommes country.

1750. North America, by M. Boiné, Naval Hydrographer.—Idem, p. 41.

Map of new discoveries west of New France, drawn by Philip

Buache, from memoirs of M. de l'Isle, professor at the Royal Academy of Sciences. The Lake of the Woods is shown as Lake Minittie.—Idem, p. 42.

1754. A physical map of the higher lands of Western Canada. In this is to be seen the new discoveries of French officers west of Lake Superior. With the rivers and lakes of which M. Jérémie has spoken in his narrative of Hudson Bay. We believe that this map was drawn by Philip Buache.

Lake Minouiltacon, or Lake of the Woods, empties into Biches Lake. The latter connects with Lac au Fer through Tête de Bœuf narrows.

To the west there is another strait which leads to Bourbon Lake. The latter lake emptied into Hudson Bay by way of Lac des Forts. ~~Bour~~ Bourbon is at the mouth of the Biches River. Prairie Lake empties into Lac au Fer. Biches River is shown as a tributary of Lac des Forts and flows south to empty into Lake Bourbon. Fort Dauphin is drawn at the mouth of Rivière de l'eau Troublée.

Rivière de l'eau Troublée empties into Prairie Lake at the northwest corner of that lake.—Idem, p. 42.

1753. Map of the Atlantic Ocean showing the English, French and Spanish settlements in North America and the West Indies, by T. Jeffreys, geographer to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, published by Act of Parliament, February 19th, 1753.—Idem, p. 43.

1755. Map of part of North America, showing New France, or Canada, by Robert de Vaugoudry, geographer.—Idem, p. 43.

1755. Canada, Louisiana and English territory, by d'Anville, of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions, secretary of His Grace the Duke of D'Orleans, November 1755.

Lake Long and River Groisilliers flow into the River of the Assenipouels, (Pigeon.) Isle Royale bears the name of Isle Minong.—Idem, p. 44.

1755. Another map by Bellin. At the junction of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers is the note, "Fort Rouge abandoned." On the south shore of the Assiniboine we find Forts Bourbon, Dauphin, St. Pierre, St. Charles and Maurepas. Massacré Island is shown in the southern part of Lake of the Woods far from the mouth of

Rainy River. Warroad River is at the southern end of Lake of the Woods. Ile au Fer is at the north end and Biches Island at the south end of Winnipeg Lake. The Monsoni tribe is north of Rainy Lake and the Graisse d'Ours on the Maligne River.—Idem, p. 45.

1762. Part of a map of Canada and of the Northern part of Louisiana showing the neighbouring country, by Thos. Jeffreys, geographer to His Majesty, 1762.

The River Kaministigouya is again called Three Rivers, and the Pigeon is Nalouagan, or Groseliens. Massacre Island is shown close to the mouth of Rainy River and near the mouth of another river, toward the northeast.—Idem, p. 48.

1766. New Mexico, Louisiana, Canada and New England, by M. Brien, Paris, 1766.—Idem, p. 48.

1775. North America, from the maps of M. Anville, with the surveys made since the cession.—Idem, p. 49.

1779. A new map of North America by Jonathan Carver.

Besides the foregoing, a certain number of maps have been deposited at the Archbishop's Palace, St. Boniface, to be preserved.

The first map bears the legend : Lake Superior and other places where there are missions of the Society of Jesus, under the Outaouais district. It bears no date, but a pencil note reads : "Paris, 1672."

Lake Superior also bore the name Tracy, which it was not to retain. At the lower end of the lake, where Duluth is now situated, we read : "River to reach the Nadouessi 60 leagues toward the Setting Sun." It was the road that led to the Sioux and the Missouri. Where Port Arthur is now located, the end of a river was shown, with the note : "River by which we go to the Assinipoulae, 120 leagues northwest."

Minong Island corresponds to Isle Royale.

A little farther south, it looks as though the Pigeon River had been faintly drawn.

At that period, no one had as yet penetrated west of Lake Superior from the Canadian side. Radisson and Desgroseilliers

had visited the mouths of the Pigeon and Kaministigoya Rivers and had reached James Bay, probably by Lake Nepigon. Indeed the map gives details of the direction in which this lake lies and would make it reach quite close to the bay. This map is not without value. It was bought by Archbishop Langevin in 1910 at Chadenat's, Paris.

* * *

The other maps have been forwarded to us by our very good friend Mr. Leau. The first is entitled: "A map of part of Lake Superior, showing the discovery of the river from the Grand Portage A, to the Barrier B. Fort St. Charles is built on the Lake of the Woods, and at Lake Tekamamiouen there is a fort bearing the name of the lake."

Fort Tekamamiouen is in $45^{\circ} 15'$ north latitude; the Grand Portage marked A is at $47^{\circ} 27'$; the fort of the Lake of the Woods is at $48^{\circ} 27'$ and the Barrier at 49 degrees.

"Only the newly discovered river, from A to B is shown in color; the other rivers drawn in black being sketched in by de la Jemmeraye from information furnished by the Indians. It was published in Father Morice's work, *The Church in Western Canada*, Vol. 1, p. 55."

Mr. Leau who had the map copied, wrote on the back, "Hydrographic Survey", (Paris) General Archives of the Navy, No. B 4044. Reproduction by tracing of map No. 85, original in the collection at Paris, November 7th, 1910."

On this map Fort Comanestigouia is shown a little to the north of Port Arthur, and the Grand Portage at the mouth of the Pigeon River on the north shore.

Fort Tekamamiouen corresponds perfectly with the site of Fort St. Pierre. Forts St. Charles, and Maurepas, and Aux Biches Island at the mouth of the Winnipeg River emptying into the lake of that name, are placed just where we know them to have been.

La Jemmeraye, who drew this map, warns us that he knew the country only to the Barrier, where the letter B appears, the limit of his personal explorations. M. de la Jemmeraye died May 10th, 1736.

While this map indicates the sites of Forts Rouge, La Reine,

Bourbon, erected several years after the death of la Jemmeraye, a note shows that these additions were made on information received from the Indians. Moreover, since la Jemmeraye ceased drawing maps, we find more serious errors. For instance the Assiniboine and Red Rivers are both shown emptying directly into Lake Winnipeg. Fort La Reine is placed south of Swan Lake, (Cygnés,) and Prairie Lake is placed between Swan and Dauphin Lakes. The confusion is such that it is impossible to straighten this out at all. This map has no value whatever except as far as that part drawn by M. de La Jemmeraye is concerned, that is from the Grand Portage to Lake Winnipeg. What does the Barrier at the Winnipeg River mean? From that Barrier, a chain of lakes connects the Lake of the Woods with Winnipeg River so that the Barrier would show a branch of the Winnipeg River that led to the Lake of the Woods and emptied into Winnipeg River half way between Fort St. Charles and Kenora.

On a map, of 1737, forwarded to France by M. de Beauharnois, the Barrier is marked in the same way.

Probably the Indians, when they went to the Winnipeg River followed the rivers and lakes that succeed each other between Flat Lake and the Winnipeg River into which they empty through Crow Duck Lake. The Barrier must be the place where Flat Lake flowed into the Winnipeg River, and they thus avoided the rapids between that branch and Kenora. These rapids were an effective barrier for canoes loaded with furs, hence most likely the name "La Barrière." This map bears no date. It is a most valuable document on account of the part drawn by M. de La Jemmeraye:

* * *

The second map furnished by Mr. Leau is inscribed "Map showing the new discoveries in the Canadian West, seas, rivers, lakes, and nations dwelling there in 1737."

"Discovery of the Western Sea, being an enclosure in a letter of M. de Beauharnois of October 14th, 1737."

In this map Fort Kamanistigoya is situated on the north bank of that river, but corresponds more to the actual site of Fort William. Massacre Island is properly marked. It shows an

abandoned fort on the west bank of the Winnipeg River a short distance from Lake Winnipeg. It must be Fort aux Roseaux where M. de La Jemmeraye died and was buried. It also shows the Barrière in almost the same manner as the preceding map.

Pointe du Bois Fort, (Harwood Point,) where the Crees gathered for their expeditions against the Sioux, and where they wanted to take J. Bte. de La Verendrye, is shown close to Red Lake in the upper part of the Red River. Here again, once Fort aux Roseaux is passed, things are in a pretty mess and we can make nothing out of it at all. Since the French in 1737 had gone no farther than Fort aux Roseaux, all the information secured was furnished by the Indians. Consequently we have a most fantastic map with lakes and rivers transposed without the east scruple and with a most amusing ingeniousness.

This map is reliable only from Lake Superior to Fort aux Roseaux, (marked abandoned fort, on the map,) about six miles below Selkirk.

* * *

Map of recent discoveries in the Canadian West, drawn according to the notes of M. de La Verendrye.

(No date.) Tracing made from Map No. 22 of "Map of Canada No. 8, 4044" in the library of the Hydrographic survey, Paris, and forwarded by Mr. L. Leau.

Forts St. Charles, St. Pierre, Maurepas, Rouge, (indicated as an old fort,) Larcine (sic) are in the places we know they actually were.

Fort Bourbon is placed at the mouth of Biches River on Bourbon Lake, on the west shore. Fort Dauphin appears on the eastern shore of a river at a point where it empties into the northern end of Prairie Lake.

The Assiniboilles de Canost, (sic), are shown as living about Prairie Lake and the Christinaux around Lake Bourbon.

The Poskoiac (Saskatchewan) River is indicated as far as a place marked as a height of land, and "unknown territory."

Forts Bourbon and Dauphin are not properly marked. Fort

Dauphin which was built by Chevalier La Vérendrye in 1741 was at the north-west corner of Lake Dauphin.

There are two Bourbon forts : the first built in 1741 at the point where the River La Biche empties into Lake Winnipegosis, on Dawson Bay, and the second where the Saskatchewan River widens to form Lake Bourbon, built some time about 1748.

* * *

Map showing recent discoveries in the Canadian West, the lakes and rivers and the nations inhabiting the country in 1740. Tracing made from map No. 23 of "Maps of Canada, No. 8, 4044" in the library of the Hydrographic survey, Paris, and forwarded by M. L. Leau.

The same remarks apply to the locations of Forts St. Charles, St. Pierre, Maurepas, Rouge and Laraine, (sic), Massacre Island is not clearly indicated.

Roseau Lake is located in the map very much as the present Roseaux River exists, and is shown close to the Red River. The Savanne Portage appears in the same neighborhood as the present Savanne. From the Lake of the Woods one can go midway between the lake and Fort Maurepas by "The Barrier" and Maurepas River. The two rivers unite to form thence forward, the Maurepas River.

Fort Bourbon is located in the map, on the south shore of Blanche River opposite a rapid where the river empties into Lake Bourbon. Fort Poskoyac is shown on the south shore of the same river, a little higher up but before reaching the junction of the Blanche and Du Brochet (Pike) Rivers.

Pointe du Bois Fort, where the Cree war bands gathered for their invasion of Sioux territory, is marked as on preceding maps, on the west of the Red River, near Red Lake. A little to the west of the Point are found the Pouannes and on the Missouri, the Pananas.

In 1738 La Vérendrye had visited the Mantanes, and this map shows the country they inhabited. Some distance up the Missouri from the Mantane country are the Belle Indians, the Pikes and the Snakes. This map is of considerable aid in follow-

ing the exploring expedition of La Vérendrye's sons to the Rocky Mountains, (1742-43.)

On the south side of Rainy River, at about 18 miles below Fort Francis, the waters of Big Forks River fall into the Rainy River. The Big Forks runs mainly in a southerly direction and in the upper part of that river, there is a portage four miles long called "Sioux Cut Feet Portage," to get to the Mississippi. The Sioux, according to the Indian tradition, used to leave the Mississippi, at that four miles portage, reach the Big Forks and get by that last river to the Rainy River and lake of the Woods.

APPENDIX IV.

LIST OF LA VÉRENDRYE'S COMPANIONS, AS FAR AS AT PRESENT KNOWN.

1. Rev. Father Charles-Michel Mésaiger, S.J., at Fort St. Charles, wintered at Fort Kaministigoya 1731-32 and at Fort St. Charles 1732-33.

2. Rev. Father Jean-Pierre Aulneau de la Touche, S.J., at Fort St. Charles from September 6th 1735 to June 6th 1736, when he was killed at Massacre Island by a band of Sioux.

3. Christopher Dufrost de La Jemmeraye, La Vérendrye's nephew and lieutenant; left Fort St. Pierre in the fall of 1731; was at Fort St. Charles in 1732; returned to Montreal in the spring of 1733, returning to Fort St. Charles in the fall of 1734. In the fall of 1735 he went to Fort Maurepas where he spent the winter. In the spring of 1736 he visited Fort aux Roseaux, where he died and was buried May 10th, 1736.

4. Jean-Baptiste de La Vérendrye, eldest son of the Explorer; accompanied La Jemmeraye, his cousin, when he went to build Fort St. Pierre in 1731. In 1732 he accompanied his father to Fort St. Charles. In 1734, his father allowed him to join the Crees and Monsonis on their warpath. In the autumn of 1734 he was at Fort Maurepas. The winter of 1735-36 he spent there and was killed at Massacre Island, June 6th, 1736.

5. Pierre Gauthier de La Vérendrye, chevalier, second son of the Explorer; spent the winter of 1731-32 at Fort Kaminis-

tigoya with his Father whom he accompanied in the spring to Fort St. Charles. In 1734 he commanded at Fort St. Charles while his father was away in Montreal; spent the winter of 1735-36 at Fort Maurepas, returning to Fort St. Charles on June 2nd, 1736; went with his father to Fort La Reine in 1738 and to the Mandanes; explored Lakes Manitoba, Winnipegosis and Bourbon in 1739; built Fort Dauphin in the autumn of 1741; made the journey to the Rocky Mountains in 1742-43 and returned to the west in 1745 and 1748.

6. François de La Vérendrye, third son of the Explorer, reached Fort St. Charles about 1732; was in command at that fort in 1738 and Fort La Reine in 1739, and accompanied his brother the chevalier to the Saskatchewan River; returned to the west in 1745 and 1748 with the Chevalier, and with him, built Forts Bourbon and Poskoyac in 1748.

7. Louis-Joseph de La Vérendrye, fourth son of the Discoverer La Vérendrye; came to Fort St. Charles on October 23rd 1735, went with his father to Fort La Reine in 1738, he or his brother François accompanied him in the visit to the Mandanes and went to the Rocky Mountains in 1742-1743.

8. Bourassa, was at Fort St. Charles in 1735 and 1736; was taken prisoner by the Sioux on June 3rd, 1736 and barely escaped burning at stake at the Lake of the Woods.

9. Louvières D'Amours, was in command at Fort Maurepas in 1738; built Fort Rouge in October 1738.

10. Nathan de la Marque, a partner in trade with La Vérendrye whom he accompanied to Fort La Reine in 1738.

11. Nolant de la Marque, brother of the foregoing Nathan. The same note applies to him.

12. Sanschagrin, who was left in command of Fort La Reine while La Vérendrye was on his trip to the Mandanes.

13. Cartier, partner in trade with La Vérendrye; went to Fort St. Charles in 1733-34. In 1734 La Vérendrye sent him to build a post on the Red River, (Fort aux Roseaux).

14. Martin Urtebise, who reached Fort St. Charles in 1733; was placed in command at Fort St. Pierre during the winter of 1733-34.

15. Gamelin, a partner in trade of La Vérendrye, who went to Fort La Reine in 1738.

16. St. Louis la Londette, a companion of the two sons of La Vérendrye on their expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

17. A. Miotte, another companion of La Vérendrye's two sons on the trip to the Rocky Mountains.

18. Louis Jetté, servant of Christopher Dufrost La Jemmeraye, Sr.; hired to go trading in the upper country, in April 4th, 1731.

19. Eustachie, placed in charge of Fort Vermillon.

20. Douère, a clerk at Fort St. Charles.

21. De Lorme, who had a law-suit with La Vérendrye.

(*Bulletin Historical Society of St. Boniface*, Vol. 1, p. 29 and 30.)

APPENDIX V.

REPORT OF THE VOYAGE UNDERTAKEN BY CHEVALIER DE LA VÉRENDRYE WITH ONE OF HIS BROTHERS IN QUEST OF THE WESTERN SEA.—FORWARDED TO THE MARQUIS DE BEAUHARNOIS.

(This record was prepared and written by Chevalier Pierre Gautier de La Vérendrye.)

"SIR :—I take the liberty of writing you an account of the journey I have made with one of my brothers and two Frenchmen selected by my father. Being honored with your command to discover the Western Sea in the country of the Mantanes, according to the reports of the natives.

Leaving Fort La Reine on April 29th, and reaching the Mantanes on May 19th, we remained there till July 23rd, in the hope that the Gens de Chevaux would arrive as they were expected from day to day. As I saw that the season was advancing and had no intention of postponing my journey, I looked about and selected two members of the Mantane tribe to guide us to the Gens de Chevaux, trusting to come across some village near the mountains or on the road thither. Two Mantanes willingly accompanied us and without a moment's delay we set out. For twenty days we

marched west-south-west which did not reassure me very much as to the correctness of my route. We saw not a human being but encountered wild beasts in plenty. I noticed in several places different colored soil, some of a light shade of blue, another of vermillion, another as green as grass, another of shining black, another white as chalk and others yellow. Had I been able to foresee that I was not to return by the same route, I would have taken specimens of each. I could not very well load myself, as I knew I had a long road to travel. We arrived, on August 11th, at the mountains where the Gens de Chevaux usually dwelt, and our guides were afraid to proceed. We began to erect a small hut in which to await the arrival of the first Indians that might happen along. We lighted fires to serve as beacons to attract passing bands to our position, as we were quite prepared to trust ourselves with the first tribe that appeared.

On September 10th, we had but one of the Mantane guides, his comrade having left us ten days before, to go back home. Every day I went or sent some one to the hills to look around. On September 14th, we saw a smoke south south-west of us. I sent one of the Frenchmen with our Mantane and they discovered a village of the Beaux Hommes who received them cordially. Our messengers made the Indians understand by signs that there were three more Frenchmen in a small building not far off. The next day the chiefs sent some of their young men back with our messengers to fetch us. We went to them on the 18th, and were received with joyous demonstrations.

Our remaining Mantane asked me to let him return home as he was afraid of a nation that was hostile to his. I paid him generously, giving him all that was useful and necessary for his return journey as I had done for his comrade.

We lived with the Beaux Hommes for twenty-one days. I informed them of our desire to secure guides as far as a village of the Gens de Chevaux. They agreed to supply young men who would guide us till we met the first party of the tribe we sought. I made them a number of presents, with which I thought they were well pleased.

We left that place on the 9th of November. We were beginning to understand them quite easily as far as our needs concern-

ed. Our guides led us south-south-west. On the second day we came to a village of the Petits Renards (Little Fox) tribe who showed great pleasure on seeing us. After giving them some presents, I had our guides tell them that we were looking for the Gens de Chevaux, whom we expected to lead us to the sea. This had the effect of starting the whole tribe on the march with us and we took the same route. I felt sure then that we would never find any sea but one that was already known. On the second day we came to a big village of the same tribe. They treated us in the friendliest manner possible. I made them a number of presents which they seemed to consider quite novel and appreciated greatly. They led us to a village of the Pioya, which we reached on the 15th. We were exceedingly well received. After making a few presents, I asked them to take us to some tribe that lived on the road to the sea. We continued our journey to the southwest and on the 17th we came to another village of the same tribe. I distributed presents here also, and they came along with us marching south and on the 19th we reached a village of the Gens de Chevaux. The tribe was in a pitiable state of desolation. They were weeping and howling on account of all their villages having been ruined by the Snake Indians and very few of the inhabitants had escaped.

The Snake Indians are accounted very brave. Not content, like other Indian tribes, with the destruction of a single village of their enemies, they kept up their campaign from spring to fall. They are a very populous tribe and woe to those they meet when on the war path.

They have no friends. We were told that in 1741 they had destroyed 17 villages, killed all the warriors and old men and old women and carried off the young women as slaves whom they sold at the sea coast for horses and merchandise. While among the Gens de Chevaux I inquired if they knew the tribe living at the sea coast. They told me that none of their tribe had ever been there as the route was held by the Snakes, but that later on we might meet some tribes that traded with the white men at the sea if we made a long detour. By means of presents I induced the whole tribe to accompany me to the country of the Bow Indians, (Gens de l'Arc), the only tribe, (on account of its valor,) that was not in dread of the Snakes. The Bow tribe is even held in high

esteem by the Snakes because of the wisdom and good leadership of their chief. I was even led to hope that I could secure some information about the people living at the seashore, as they were on friendly terms with the tribes that traded with them.

Having kept a southwesterly direction we met, on the 18th of November, a large number of Belle River Indians, in one of their largest villages. They gave us news of the Bow tribe which was not far off.

Continuing our southwestern route, all together, we saw, on the 21st the Bow village that seemed to be some size. All the tribes in that country have large numbers of horses, asses and mules, which they use to carry their baggage and which they ride when hunting or travelling.

Arriving in the village, we were taken at once to the chief's lodge. Treating us in a gracious and agreeable manner that was far from the style common among Indians, he caused our luggage to be brought to his own lodge, which was very large. He also ordered our horses to be well cared for.

We had been extremely well received and treated up to this time by all the Indians we had met, but we had seen nothing to compare with the grand style of the head chief of the Bow tribe. He was not a bit selfish like the others, but took the greatest care of everything belonging to us.

I became greatly attached to this chief, who richly merited all our best friendship. He took so much care to teach me his language, that in a very short time I was able to make myself understood and to understand him.

I asked him if he were acquainted with the white men at the sea coast and whether he could take us to them. His answer was : "We know them from the stories that have been told by the prisoners brought by the Snake Indians whom we will soon meet. Do not be surprised if you see us joined by many villages. Word has been sent out on all sides for them to meet us. Every day you hear the war chant. It is not without purpose. We are going to the high mountains which are near the sea, to seek the Snake Indians. Do not be afraid to come with us. You have nothing to fear ; you will be able to look upon the sea of which you are in search."

Continuing his speech, the chief said: "The Frenchmen that live by the sea are numerous. They own great numbers of slaves whom they settle on their lands according to their tribes. They are given separate dwellings, and are allowed to marry and not being oppressed they have no desire to run away, but are happy to stay with their masters. The white man breed many horses and other animals which they use on their lands. They have a number of captains over the soldiers, others also who lead in worship." He repeated a number of the words used by these men and I recognized it as Spanish, and, what fully convinced me of it was the story he told me of the massacre of the Spanish who sought to discover the Missouri, of which I had already heard. All this checked my ardor to search a sea that was already known; nevertheless I should have liked very much to go there, if it could have been managed. We continued on the move, going sometimes south-south-west, sometimes north-west, and all the time our numbers increased, fresh accessions arriving from the different villages of various tribes. On January 1st, 1743, we came in sight of the mountains. The warriors exceeded 2,000 in number and with their families formed quite a multitude. All the time we advanced through a rich prairie country well stocked with game. Every night there was singing and howling and they continually wept over us, beseeching us to accompany them on their warlike expedition. I resisted steadily, giving them to understand that our purpose was to pacify the country and not to make trouble.

The chief of the Bow tribe told us often that he was sorry for us in view of what the other tribes would think of us for not wishing to take part in the war and he asked a favor (being bound to the others and unable to accompany us until after the return from the war.). The favor was that we would accompany them as spectators only, and not to expose ourselves, as the Snakes were our enemies as well as theirs for we must know that they had no friends.

We held a council among ourselves to see what we should do. We decided to go with them on account of the impossibility of making any other decision, and also because of my desire to see the ocean from the top of the mountains. I told the chief of our resolve and he seemed quite pleased. The Indians held a grand

council then, to which as usual, we were invited. The speeches by the representatives of each tribe were very lengthy. The Bow chief translated them to me. The gist of their talk was that all were concerned for the measures to be taken for the safety of their women and children during their absence. They also discussed the method by which they would attack their enemies. Then they turned to us, asking us not to leave them. I answered the chief of the Bows, who translated their request to me, and translated my answer to them; that the head chief of the French desired that all his children should be at peace, and had ordered us to invite all the nations to preserve the peace as he wished the world to be peaceful; but seeing that their cause for war was just, I bowed to their request, so urgently pressed, to assist them as adviser only, should they require such assistance. We were heartily thanked and entertained to the lengthy ceremonies of the calumet.

We continued our march till January 8th. On the 9th we left the camp, leaving my brother to guard the baggage which was stored in the lodge of the Bow chief.

Most of the party was mounted and advanced in good order; at last on the 12th day, we reached the mountains. Most of the range seemed to be heavily timbered with all kinds of wood and very high. Having reached the most populous villages of the Snake tribe, our scouts reported that the enemy had all fled in haste, abandoning their cabins and a great part of their belongings.

This news terrified our army, for, the enemy having discovered their approach might have gone to attack the villages they had left behind and might reach them before they could go to their rescue.

The chief of the Bow Indians tried his utmost to change their plans and continue to advance. No one would listen to him. "It is very regrettable," he said to me, "that I have brought you this far and cannot go any farther."

I was exceedingly disappointed at not being able to ascend the mountains as I had intended. So we took the back track. We had gone thus far in good order, but the return was quite different, everyone going as he pleased. Our horses, though good, were tired out and had not much chance to feed.

I was with the Bow chief, and my two Frenchmen followed us. After having covered quite a long distance, I noticed that they were no longer behind us. I had not looked behind me for some time. I told the chief that I could not see my men and he said: "I will stop the whole party." I rode back at full speed and found them at the end of an island feeding their horses. As I joined them I noticed about fifteen men approaching from the woods, shielding themselves with their arrow-quivers. One of them was well in front of the others and we let them get within half a rifle shot. Seeing that they intended to attack us I decided to let them have a few shots, which caused them to retreat precipitately, this weapon being very much feared by the tribes that are not accustomed to it, as their shields cannot stop the bullets.

We stayed there till night when we started to move, as we thought, in the direction our Indians had gone, hoping to overtake them. The prairie we were crossing at the time was very dry and bare; the hoof marks of the horses could not be distinguished. We continued our march trusting to luck, not knowing whether we were going right or not. At last, on February 9th, the second day of our retreat, we reached one of the Bow villages, being among the first to arrive. The Bow chief had tried hard to stop the band that had been travelling with us, but they were too much afraid to stay in such close proximity to the foe. They were very uneasy all that night. The next day he caused his men to extend in a long line so as to intercept us in case we should ride by. He sent some back in search of us, but they did not find us. In the end he reached the village, five days after us, and more dead than alive, so grieved was he at not knowing what had become of us. The first news he had was that we had reached the village the day before the bad weather had set in, snow to a depth of two feet having fallen the day after we got there, with a terrible wind. His grief was turned to joy and he was at a loss to know how to express it.

What was most surprising was that the Bow chief should detach his men to search for us in parties. Each day saw men arrive with very long faces, thinking we had been lost. The tribes had separated in order the better to find supplies. We travelled

on with the Bow tribe until the beginning of March, still keeping east-south-east.

I sent one of our Frenchmen with an Indian, to the Little Cherry Indians, having heard they were near. It took ten days to make the journey. When they came back, they brought us a message that we were invited to join them.

I then told the Bow chief of our intention to go and he was deeply affected at the prospect of parting company with us. We were also sorry because of the many kindnesses he had shown us. To please him, I promised him that, if he would build a fort at a small river which I pointed out to him, and settle down and grow grain, I would return and visit him. He agreed to all that I proposed and begged me, after seeing my father at Fort La Reine, to leave as soon as spring came and join him. I promised to do all he asked, to please him, and presented him with everything I had that I thought would be useful.

As there was no prospect of finding guides to take us to the Spaniards, and being sure my father was getting uneasy about us, we decided to hasten back to Fort La Reine, and parted from the Bow tribe with sincere regret on both sides.

We reached the Little Cherry tribe on March 15th. They had just returned from their winter quarters and were two days march from their fort which is on the bank of the Missouri. We came to their fort on the 19th of March and were received with joyful demonstration. I set about learning their language and found it rather easy.

Among these Indians there was a man who had spent some time with the Spaniards and spoke that language as fluently as if it were his own mother tongue. I frequently made inquiries of him, and he told me, as I had heard about him, that he had been baptized and had not forgotten his prayers.

I asked him if it was easy to go to the Spaniards, and he replied that it was a long way, beset with many dangers because of the Snake Indians; that it would take at least twenty days to go there on horseback.

I asked him what kind of trade they carried on and he told me they manufactured iron articles and did a big business in buf-

falo skins and slaves, giving in exchange horses and merchandises, whichever the Indians wanted, but never guns or ammunition.

He told me that, at a distance of three days march from the fort, there had been a Frenchman living for a number of years. I would have found this man if our horses were fit to travel. I decided to write to him, asking him to come and see us as I would wait for him till the end of March, having arranged to leave early in April for the Mantane country and then for Fort La Reine. I asked him, if he could not come, to send us news of himself.

I placed on top of a hill near the fort, a lead tablet with the arms and name of the King of France, and raised a pyramid of stones, for the General. I told the Indians, who knew nothing of the lead tablet that I had buried, that I had erected the pyramid of stones to mark our passage through that country. I would have liked very much to have taken the latitude of that place, but our astrolabe was out of order since the beginning of our journey, the ring being broken.

Receiving no news of our French friend, by the month of April, and being urged to start by the guides I had engaged to take us to the Mantanes, and our horses being in good condition, I made ready to leave, and gave the chiefs of the tribe presents. They had always treated us well, and taken good care of us. We also made presents to a number of prominent men among our good friends.

I left a message with the chiefs, to the effect that if the Frenchman, by any chance, should come as I had written him, within a short time of my departure, that he could find us at the Mantanes, where we intended to make a little visit. I would have been glad to bring him away from among the Indians.

I assured the chief of the tribe that I would take good care of the three young men whom he gave us for guides and that, although the Mantanes were their enemies, they need have no fear as, being with us, they would be quite safe.

We left on April 2nd, amidst general regrets of all the tribe. They gave us pressing invitations to revisit them.

On the 9th, about noon, we reached a village of about 25 lodges, of the Flèches Collées, or Prairie Sioux, on the march. We passed through among their women and waggons. Our stay was

very brief. They treated us in a most friendly manner and showed us where they were going to pitch their camp. We chose a place in sight of their camp, thinking that perhaps some of them might come over to us. We kept a strict watch. Nobody came.

The next day we continued our march, sometimes north-north-east, and sometimes north-west as far as the Mantanes country without meeting anyone. We arrived there on May 18th. I sent our guides back, after having rewarded them to their satisfaction.

It was our plan to spend fifteen or twenty days to rest ourselves, put our horses in good condition, but on the 26th, I learned that there were some Assiniboels at Fort la Butte who were ready to start for Fort La Reine. We got ready to take advantage of their company and thus have protection from hostile attacks. We went to Fort la Butte on the 27th, early in the morning, but the Assiniboels had just gone. We had not notified them that we wanted to go with them. Two Mantanes offered to come with us to see my father and learn the road to Fort La Reine. By hastening we overtook the Assiniboels as they were making camp. There were one hundred of them. We proceeded together.

On the 31st, our scouts noticed thirty Sioux in an ambush on our route. We attacked in a body. They were surprised to see such a large party but retired in good order, facing about from time to time to meet those who came a little too close. They knew with whom they were dealing, believing the Assiniboels to be cowards.

As soon as they saw us, all mounted on our horses, and knew that we were Frenchmen, they fled in great haste, never looking back. We had none killed but several wounded. We do not know how many they lost except one of their number whom we found in our ranks.

We arrived at the village close to the mountain on June 2nd. As our horses were tired, we remained with the villagers till the 20th. We secured a guide to take us to Fort La Reine, where we arrived on July 2nd, to the great relief of my father who, as it had been impossible to send him any news, had been very uneasy concerning us ever since we had left. We were immensely relieved ourselves to be out of hardships, and danger.

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ERRATA

Page 7, line 8—long in lieu of large.

Page 16, line 19—outlet in lieu of putlet.

Page 17, line 20—bearded in lieu of beared.

Page 19, line 22—of in lieu of that.

Page 20, line 4 and 5—*should read*: having visited it, and Lake Winnipeg, for having heard the Indians speak of it.

Page 25, line 11—trading in lieu of tarding.

Page 30, line 3—devoted in lieu of devote.

Page 33, line 1—Ochakah in lieu of Ochaka.

Page 93, Title—February 10th, 1739 in lieu of February 10th, 1738.

Page 98, line 14—Maize in lieu of Wheat.

Page 103, line 32—grand in lieu of grant.

Page 124, line 11—1756 in lieu of 1758.

